

The Ethos of Childhood as a Therapeutic Force: A Study of Johanna Spyri's

Heidi

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by

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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO
One	Introduction	1
Two	Ethos of Childhood	16
Three	Nature as the Regenerative Force	25
Four	Bonds of Family and Friendship	45
Five	Summation	54
	Works Cited	62

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **The Ethos of Childhood as a Therapeutic Force: A Study of Johanna Spyri's *Heidi***, submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature, is a work done by Abisha Menesa. M during the year 2019 – 2021 and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **The Ethos of Childhood as a Therapeutic Force: A Study of Johanna Spyri's *Heidi***, submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts, is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

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PREFACE

Johanna Louise Spyri's *Heidi* narrates the story of an orphan girl Heidi who lives with her grandfather in the Swiss Alps, and is famous for its vivid portrayal of the landscape. The project entitled **The Ethos of Childhood as a Therapeutic Force: A Study of Johanna Spyri's *Heidi*** analyses how the nature and the human nature nurture and regenerate the lives from the perspectives of the child protagonist of the novel.

The First chapter **Introduction** focuses on the significance of Swiss literature with a special focus on Johanna Spyri and the characteristics of her works of art.

The Second chapter **Ethos of Childhood** captures the innocence, perspectives and spirituality of childhood truthfully in all dimensions.

The Third chapter **Nature as the Regenerative Force** elaborates on the beauty and abundant blessings of God to the manhood through nature. The restorative healing power of nature as well as the inherent goodness and mercy of God bring about positive changes in the lives of the characters.

The Fourth chapter **Bonds of Family and Friendship** throws light on the vital family values, necessary to live an honourable life in harmony, in the world community through the relationship between the family members and friends as portrayed in the novel.

The Fifth chapter **Summation** sums all the aspects dealt in the preceding chapters. It also concludes with the scope for further research.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Where there are people there is literature. Literature is a record of human experience. It is people's impression of life. Its boundaries cross our lives, our traditions, culture, social relations, national unity and a lot more. It serves as a reflection of reality, a product of art, and window to an ideology, everything that happens within a society can be written, recorded in, and learned from the piece of literature. Whether it be poetry or prose, literature provides insight, knowledge, or wisdom, and emotion towards the person who partakes it entirely. Our life is manifested in the form of literature. It is an embodiment of words based on human tragedies, desires, and feelings. It cultivates wonders, inspires a generation and feeds information. Even though it is dynamic, endless, multi-dimensional, literature contributes significant purpose to world we live in.

As there is no dominant national language, the four main languages French, Italian, German and Romansch which form the four branches make up the literature of Switzerland. The original Swiss Confederation, from its foundation in 1291 up to 1798, gained only a few French-speaking districts in what is now the Canton of Fribourg, and so the German language dominated. During that period the Swiss vernacular literature was in German, although in the 18th century, French became fashionable in Bern and elsewhere. At that time, Geneva and Lausanne were not yet Swiss. Geneva was an ally and Vaud a subject land. The French branch does not really begin to qualify as Swiss writing until after 1815, when the French-speaking regions gained full status as Swiss cantons. The Italian and Romansch-Ladin branches are less prominent.

Like the earlier charters of liberties, the original League of 1291 was drawn up in Latin. Later alliances among the cantons, as well as documents concerning the whole Confederation- the Parsons Ordinance of 1370, the Sempach Ordinance of 1393, the Compact of Stans (1481) and all the Recesses of the Diets-were compiled in German. Political documents are not necessarily literature, but these pre-Reformation alliances rested on popular consent, and were expressed in vernacular German rather than in Latin.

In the 18th century the intellectual movement in Switzerland greatly developed, though it was naturally and strongly influenced by local characteristics. Basel, Bern and especially Zurich were the chief literary centres. Basel was particularly distinguished for its mathematicians, such as Leonhard Euler (1707–1783), and three members of the Bernoulli family refugees from Antwerp, the brothers Jakob (1654–1705) and Johann (1667–1748), and the latter's son Daniel (1700–1782). But its chief literary glory was Isaac Iselin (1728–1783), one of the founders of the Helvetic Society (1760) and of the Economical Society (1777), and author of a treatise on the philosophy of history entitled *Geschichte der Menschheit* (1764), and of another on ideal politics, *Philosophische und patriotische Träume eines Menschenfreundes* (1755), while many of his economical tracts appeared (1776–1782) under the general title of *Ephemeriden der Menschheit*. At Bern Albrecht von Haller, distinguished as a scientific writer, is also famous for his poem "Die Alpen" (1732) and his travels in his native country did much to excite and stimulate the love of mountain scenery. In the later literary history of German-speaking Switzerland three names stand out above all others: Albert Bitzius, known as Jeremias Gotthelf from the first of his numerous tales of peasant life in the Emmenthal, Gottfried

Keller, perhaps the most genuinely Swiss poet and novelist of the century, and Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, also a poet and novelist, but of more cosmopolitan leanings and tastes. Jakob Burckhardt was a famous writer on Italian art, while Jakob Frey (1824–1875) continued the work of Bitzian by his tales of Swiss peasant life. Ulrich Hegner (1759–1840) of Winterthur wrote novels full of local colour, as is also the case with David Hess (painter) (1770–1843) in his description of a cure at Baden in Aargau and various tales. Johann Martin Usteri (1763–1827) of Zürich was one of the earliest to write poems in his native dialect.

There are a number of Zurich poets or versifiers, some of whose writings have become very well known. Such were Heinrich Leuthold (1827–1879), August Corrodi (1826–1885) and Leonhard Widmer (1808–1868), the author of “Trittst im Morgenrot daher” (1842) which is set to music by the Cistercian monk Alberic Zwyssig (1808–1854), is now known as the Swiss Psalm, of “Es lebt in jeder Schweizerbrust” (1842), and “Wo Berge sich erheben” (1844). To the Bernese poet, Johann Rudolf Wyss (1782–1830), whose father, Johann David Wyss (1743–1818), was the author of the Swiss Family Robinson, the countrymen owe the Swiss national anthem, “Rufst du mein Vaterland” and the song, “Herz, mys Herz, warum so trurig” while Johann Georg Krauer (1792–1845), of Lucerne, wrote the “Rutlilied, Von ferne sei herzlich gegrubet,” and Gottfried Keller himself was responsible for “O mein Heimatland.” Gottlieb Jakob Kuhn (1775–1845) wrote many poems in the Bernese dialect about the Alps and their inhabitants. Less national in sentiment and more metaphysical are the lyrics of Dranmor, the pen-name of the Bernese Ferdinand Schmid (1823–1888).

Among the chief Swiss writers in the department of belles-lettres, novelists, poets, etc., one could mention Ernst Zahn, Meinrad Lienert, Arnold Ott, Carl Spitteler, Fritz Marti, Walther Siegfried, Adolf Frey, Hermann Hesse, Jakob Christoph Heer, Joseph Victor Widmann, and Gottfried Strasser. Isabella Kaiser wrote poems and stories. Johanna Spyri is famous for her children's stories including Heidi, a fictional character living in the Swiss Alps.

Children's literature can be broadly defined as the body of written works and accompanying illustrations produced in order to entertain or instruct young people. The genre encompasses a wide range of works, including acknowledged classics of world literature, picture books and easy-to-read stories written exclusively for children, and fairy tales, lullabies, fables, folk songs, and other primarily orally transmitted materials or more specifically defined as fiction, non-fiction, poetry, or drama intended for and used by children and young people. C. Hatfield in his "Comic Art, Children's Literature, and the New Comic Studies" defines children's literature as "all books written for children, excluding works such as comic books, joke books, cartoon books, and non-fiction works that are not intended to be read from front to back, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference materials" (365).

The International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature notes that "the boundaries of genre are not fixed but blurred" (3). Sometimes, no agreement can be reached about whether a given work is best categorised as literature for adults or children. Some works defy easy categorization. J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series were written and marketed for young adults, but it is also popular among adults. The

series' extreme popularity led *The New York Times* to create a separate bestseller list for children's books.

Despite the widespread association of children's literature with picture books, spoken narratives existed before printing, and the root of many children's tales go back to ancient storytellers. Seth Lerer, in the opening of *Children's Literature: A Reader's History from Aesop to Harry Potter*, says, "This book presents a history of what children have heard and read.... The history I write of is a history of reception" (2).

Early children's literature consisted of spoken stories, songs, and poems which are used to educate, instruct, and entertain children. It was only in the eighteenth century, with the development of the concept of childhood, that a separate genre of children's literature began to emerge, with its own divisions, expectations, and canon. The earliest of these books were educational books, books on conduct, and simple ABCs-often decorated with animals, plants, and anthropomorphic letters.

In 1962, French historian Philippe Aries argues in his book *Centuries of Childhood* that the modern concept of childhood only emerged in recent times. He explains that children were in the past not considered as greatly different from adults and were not given significantly different treatment. As evidence for this position, he notes that, apart from instructional and didactic texts for children written by clerics like the Venerable Bede and Elfric of Eynsham, there was a lack of any genuine literature aimed specifically at children before the 18th century.

Other scholars have qualified this viewpoint by noting that there was a literature designed to convey the values, attitudes, and information necessary for children within

their cultures, such as the Play of Daniel from the twelfth century. Pre-modern children's literature, therefore, tended to be of a didactic and moralistic nature, with the purpose of conveying conduct-related, educational and religious lessons.

Johanna Heusser was born and raised in a small village named Hirzel, situated on the prealpine hills above Lake Zurich. Her father Johann Jacob Heusser was a country doctor coming from a rural background. Her mother Meta (Margareta) Heusser-Schweizer, daughter of a pastor and descendant from a family closely related to the 18th century literary circles in Zurich (Gessner, Lavater), wrote pietist religious poetry and hymns.

Johanna Heusser had three brothers and three sisters, but one brother died as a small child. Johanna Heusser grew up in a sheltered upper class family environment, but also deeply rooted in a small rural community. At the age of 14 she was sent to the city of Zurich, where she lived with her aunt and could attend a high school. Two years later, she was sent to a residential school in the French-speaking city of Yverdon, western Switzerland - a typical choice for an upper class Swiss family at the time.

After graduation she returned home, helped her mother, taught her little siblings and read a lot. Politically, these years were quite turbulent in Switzerland with a short civil war between conservatives and liberals in 1847 followed by the foundation of a modern, democratic, federal national state with national parliament and government replacing a loose confederacy of small territories. Seen on this background, staying in Hirzel with her parents might have been a choice for safety.

In 1852, at the age of 25, Johanna married Johann Bernhard Spyri, a lawyer and journalist and moved to the pulsating city of Zurich again. Her husband became General Secretary of the city administration, at the time a very honorary position, in 1868. As Johann Bernhard Spyri was a workaholic and did not show too much interest for his wife, the marriage was not very happy.

Johanna Spyri suffered from depression during pregnancy and could not recover from it for several years. She had one son, Bernhard, who suffered from tuberculosis, a disease that affected quite a number of people and was not easy to fight until the 1960's. Bernhard died at the age of 28. The same year, 1884, Johanna Spyri's husband died as well.

A friend of the family encouraged Johanna Spyri to write, and so she published her first story "Ein Blatt auf Vronys Grab" in 1871. The story is about a woman being maltreated by her husband, an alcoholic; Vrony prays to God and accepts her fate as she is advised by her pastor. This story is a dismal portrait of 19th century social reality. At the time this story was a success, and it certainly encouraged its authoress to keep on writing.

Johanna Spyri's personality is multifaceted. Earlier portraits focused on her depressive, introverted side. Recent analysis of her letters shows some other aspects, however. As a widow, she traveled a lot, had many friends and was a very self-confident, independent woman. It would seem that writing stories helped her to find her personal road out of the traditional, all too devotional way of accepting suffering as an unchangeable fate - a way that had been paved by her family. Johanna Spyri did not,

however, quit her faith and turn into a viperish social critic, but rather believed in personal development and in accepting challenges.

Her books include *Ein Blatt auf Vronys Grab* (1870; “A Leaf from Vrony’s Grave”), *Heidi*, 2 vol. (1880–81), *Heimatlos* (1881), and *Gritli* (1882). *Heidi*, a book for children, is popular all over the world. Her psychological insight into the child mind, her humour, and her ability to enter into childish joys and sorrows give her books appeal and lasting value. Her love of homeland, feeling for nature, unobtrusive piety, and cheerful wisdom gave both her work and her life their unique quality.

Heidi is published in two volumes in 1880–81. First publication consisted out of two separate books, *Heidi’s Years of Learning and Journeys*, and *Heidi is using her knowledge*. The book soon became known as one of the best-selling books ever written, and one of the most popular Swiss books as well.

Zurich, largest city of Switzerland and capital of the canton of Zürich is located in an Alpine setting at the northwestern end of Lake Zürich. This financial, cultural, and industrial centre stretches out between two forested chains of hills, about 40 miles (60 km) from the northern foothills of the Alps.

While some academics in Switzerland are very critical about Johanna Spyri in general and her novel *Heidi* in particular, it may be significant that the only complete edition of Johanna Spyri’s works was published in Japan (1962). As far as has been reported in Swiss newspapers, young Japanese women do not see and love *Heidi* as a precocious, vigorous teenager (as Imhof presents her). *Heidi* seems to be loved as a child of nature, a symbol for romanticism and lost innocence. Such notions, however,

remind of the end of the 19th century when authoress Johanna Spyri born as the daughter of a physician in a small peasant village Hirzel am Albis moves to live with her aunt in the city of Zurich where she could attend a high school. She shares the feelings of insecurity with thousands of workers displaced by the compulsions of the industrialization. Moving out of rural Switzerland into modern cities was sort of a “cultural shock” for most of them. Besides they had to struggle hard to find their place, not only economically, but emotionally as well.

The story is about a girl named Heidi who first lives with her aunt Dete, but Dete would like to concentrate on her career. So she brings Heidi to her grandfather, a queer old man living in an alpine cottage far from the next village. He is therefore called Alm-Uncle. Alm-Uncle is good-hearted but mistrusts anybody and wants to keep the child from all evils of the world. So he refuses to send Heidi to school; instead she goes to the pastures, together with Peter, a shepherd boy looking after the goats. He is taking a rather good care of Heidi. Rough and inaccessible at first glance, he does everything within his possibilities to provide her all the essentials, but also teaching her about the harsh life in the mountains. Heidi enjoys living with her grandfather because she is receiving enough of love and affection, also enjoying the nature around her and the comfort of her home. This (all too harmonious) alpine idyll finds a sudden end when aunt Dete comes in again and brings Heidi to Frankfurt (Germany) where she shall stay with Clara, the paralysed daughter of a rich family, and is supposed to learn something.

Heidi who has never seen a town, least a city, travels a distance of over 500 km (300 miles) to one of the largest European cities situated in a foreign country with a different culture. Thanks to the grandmother of Clara, Heidi learns to read and write,

but she can't get acquainted to the strict discipline in a bourgeois upper class house (personified by governess Fraulein Rottenmeier). Heidi is very lonely and gets depressed by the gray anonymous city. She becomes ill of homesickness and starts to walk in her sleep. Miss Rottenmeier is alarmed, not because of the fate of the poor child, but rather because she thinks that there are ghosts in the old house. Finally Clara's father Herr Stresemann and the sympathetic doctor of the family decide to stay up till midnight and find about the ghosts. When the doctor sees Heidi walking around in her sleep, he finds the right diagnosis and sends her back to the Alps.

Next summer, Clara visits Heidi there. They go to the pastures and Heidi shows Clara all the beauty of her alpine world. Peter gets terribly jealous, and in a moment when he feels unobserved, he pushes the empty wheelchair down to the valley so it gets smashed. Clara wants to see the flowers and is forced to walk - and her desire is strong enough that she overcomes her handicap. Healings at body, spirit and soul in that healthy Alpine world - end well, all well.

Heidi is a delightful story for children of life in the Alps. Johanna Spyri had been well known to the younger readers of her own country since 1880, when she published her story, *Heimathlos*, which ran into three or more editions, and which, like her other books, as she states on the title page, was written for those who love children, as well as for the youngsters themselves. Her own sympathy with the instincts and longings of the child's heart is shown in her picture of Heidi. The record of the early life of this Swiss child amid the beauties of her passionately loved mountain-home and during her exile in the great town has been for many years a favorite book of younger readers in Germany and America.

Madame Spyri, like Hans Andersen, had by temperament a peculiar skill in writing the simple histories of an innocent world. In all her stories she shows an underlying desire to preserve children alike from misunderstanding and the mistaken kindness that frequently hinder the happiness and natural development of their lives and characters. The authoress, as we feel in reading her tales, lived among the scenes and people she describes, and the setting of her stories has the charm of the mountain scenery amid which she places her small actors.

Heidi became a world-wide success story already towards the end of the 19th century and children do still like it today - as a book, as a radio play and as a movie. *Heidi* is by far the most popular piece of Swiss literature ever written and has been translated from German into 50 languages, been filmed more than a dozen times, and more than 50 million copies of *Heidi* have been sold world-wide (Switzerland's population is only 8 million).

Johanna Spyri through *Heidi* tries to give orientation in a world shaken by rapid social change, a world in disorder that makes people feel insecure and this is exactly what makes the story attractive today in view of neoliberalism and globalization. The foundation on an intact alpine nature is, however, but one element of the story and we should not take an isolated view on just that.

Heidi as presented by Johanna Spyri does not return into the intact alpine world as if she had never been to the metropolitan city - to the contrary: Heidi makes use of what she has learnt. Johanna Spyri does not opt for a cheap retreat into an idealised sweet world (as grandfather Alm-Uncle does in his frustration about mankind), neither

for an obstinate keeping to simple views (as Peter the shepherd, who is too lazy to learn reading and writing).

Johanna Spyri presents a third way and wants to empower people to accept new challenges while keeping a good heart like Heidi, who is able to read stories to Peter's blind grandmother and even moves her unsociable grandfather to return into the village community.

At first sight, Heidi is certainly an emotional story dealing with primitive fears; the anxiety of the child to be without parents and to be displaced.. To this substance the story is reduced essentially when Imboden starts his 2001 Heidi movie on the Alp (not on lovely pastures, but rather in a modern mountain restaurant, however), and finishes at Pop music concert in Zurich's Hall Stadium. Imboden openly admits that he intends to radically change the view we have of Heidi, because it has been misused, instrumentalized ideologically and politically. With this kind of internal distance to the traditional view of Heidi, we might, however, miss the chance to understand this novel for children in a deeper sense - taking into account that all good children's books have to say quite something to adults as well. Perhaps we have to keep a little distance from the tendency of Swiss intellectuals to criticise traditional Swiss values and take a really detached view - for example a Japanese view.

Heidi is a 2015 Swiss family film directed by Alain Gsponer and based on the 1881 novel of the same name by Johanna Spyri. It stars Anuk Steffen in the title role, alongside Bruno Ganz, Katharina Schüttler, Quirin Agrippi, Isabelle Ottmann and Anna Schinz. The ten year old Steffen was chosen from among five hundred young actresses.

The film was shot on location in the Alps, mainly in the region of Grisons, including Bergün and Rheinwald.

Heidi is a book of absolutes, with definite vices and definite virtues. The chief vices are selfishness, hypocrisy, and materialism, as embodied mostly in the minor characters: Heidi's Aunt Dete, the Sesemanns' head housekeeper Fraulein Rottenmeier, and the villagers. The virtues are equally clear and include love for others, faith in God, humility, and respect for nature. The "good" people - Heidi and her grandfather, Peter's blind grandmother, Herr Sesemann, his invalid daughter Clara, and Grandmamma Sesemann- are easily recognised as such. Peter, the goatherd, is the only neutral character. He is basically lazy, somewhat simpleminded, and very jealous, but he is a friend of Heidi's and embodies the essence of pastoral life. He also learns the power of prayer and forgiveness at the end, which makes him the only character to grow; all the other "good" characters are good when the story begins.

The vices in this book are obvious when they appear. Dete reveals her selfishness with her treatment of Heidi, whom she considers little more than a piece of baggage left behind by her dead sister. Dete cares for the girl when it is convenient or when she has something to gain by it but abandons her when she has better things to do. The opening scene, in which she delivers Heidi up to her grandfather, whom everyone fears, makes her selfishness clear. Similarly, when she snatches Heidi away after her grandfather has grown to love her, Dete again acts for her own personal gain.

Another vice, hypocrisy, manifests itself in all the villagers, in most of the servants, and in Aunt Dete. Spyri implies that society as a whole is hypocritical, basing its actions primarily on appearances. Gossip rules, and people always criticise others

when in fact they are no better themselves. Heidi's grandfather, the Alm Uncle, has moved to the mountain because of his refusal to tolerate this hypocrisy. He tells Heidi that when the great bird of the mountain croaks and screams he "is mocking at the people because they all go huddling and gossiping together, and encourage one another in evil talking and deeds" (39). Even those who think well of the grandfather have not the courage of their convictions to defend him, waiting until the pastor has publicly shaken his hand before greeting him themselves like an old friend whom they had long missed.

Hand in hand with gossip goes materialism, another form of slavery to appearances. Fraulein Rottenmeier tries to throw away Heidi's tattered straw hat and red shawl, considering them inappropriate for her new station, but Heidi is sentimentally attached to them and knows she will need them for her homecoming. She remembers her grandfather's parting words to Dete about her hat and feather and does not wish to make the same mistake herself. To this end, she sheds her pretty town dress and feathered hat at Brigitta's house, explaining to the puzzled Brigitta, "I would rather go home to grandfather as I am or else perhaps he would not know me" (121). Her instincts prove correct, for his first pleased response to her return is, "You don't look much of a grand lady" (121). The interesting point about materialism in this book is that the truly wealthy people, such as the Sesemanns, are not the least bit materialistic, while those who wish to be wealthy are the most preoccupied with material objects. The true benefit of the grandfather's way of life is that, without being wealthy, he has no need of money in order to live comfortably. He is already rich in the intangible gifts of the mountain.

A major message of Spyri's book is that people must love each other and work together. Although outsiders never penetrate Alm Uncle's gruff exterior, he is never unkind to any creature. His goats are the best cared for on the mountain, and from the start, his tenderness toward Heidi is quite natural.

The important message from *Heidi* is:

God certainly knows of some happiness for us which He is going to bring out of the trouble, only we must have patience and not run away. And then all at once something happens and we see clearly ourselves that God has had some good thought in His mind all along; but because we cannot see things beforehand, and only know how dreadfully miserable we are, we think it is always going to be so. (151)

Madame Spyri had by temperament a peculiar skill in writing the simple histories of an innocent world. In all her stories she shows an underlying desire to preserve children alike from misunderstanding and the mistaken kindness that frequently hinder the happiness and natural development of their lives and characters. The authoress, as we feel in reading her tales, lived among the scenes and people she describes, and the setting of her stories has the charm of the mountain scenery amid which she places her small actors. The second chapter "Ethos of Childhood" records the early life of the Swiss child amid the beauties of her passionately loved mountain home and during her exile in the great town.

Chapter Two

Ethos of Childhood

The children's book *Heidi* has managed to remain relevant a century after it was published. It is not usual for children's books to bear heavy literary elements but Spyri's book has found a position among distinguished works of literature and not just among children.

The book is set in the Alps, and this setting plays a big part in elevating the book's stature. As a literary classic, *Heidi* has been turned into diverse art forms including television movies, plays, and cartoons. It is a classic work of literature and not just a simple children's book. Various literary elements including the book's plot, themes, and other literary devices add to the popularity of the book.

Heidi captures the ethos of childhood truthfully in all dimensions. Several moral lessons can be learned from the novel. Among them are the effective and restorative healing power of nature, as well as the inherent goodness and mercy of the Christian God.

The plot of this story is one of the rich elements in this book. The story revolves around Heidi, the main character, an orphaned girl who moves from her aunt's home to live with her grandfather in the hillside. Heidi's grandfather is introduced as a man who leads an eccentric life. The man lived reclusively on the mountainside, a short distance away from the village. After leaving the girl with her grandfather, Heidi's aunt proceeds to move to Frankfurt due to strained work obligations. Heidi brings her grandfather back into mountain society through her angelic ways, sheer love, and adorable personality.

The story insinuates how Heidi's charming and bubbly nature ends up influencing her grandfather's cynical nature. A recurring plot theme is Heidi's grandfather's protective nature and her interaction with Peter, a local herd boy. Heidi is unable to go to school because her grandfather does not trust the girl's safety out in the village. The plot's climax occurs when circumstances change and the main character has to move to Frankfurt to live with Clara. However, the girl finds it hard to thrive in the urban conditions and she ends up moving back to the village.

Heidi takes place in Swiss Alps and in nearby Germany, most particularly Frankfurt. The time is the late 1800s, when public opinion and traditional morality dominate daily life. On Heidi's mountain, the setting is pastoral in the literal sense, home to a shepherd and goats and filled with abundant flowers, broad meadows, gentle winds, ancient fir trees, and heavy snows. Sunrises and sunsets are always noticed and celebrated, especially by Heidi and her grandfather. Nothing is ever taken for granted.

The wildness of the place often frightens away city visitors. Upon returning to the mountain, for example, Sebastian lets Heidi go on alone from the Mayenfeld train station, "glad of having no tiring and dangerous journey on foot before him" (118). Transportation is difficult, to be sure, for after the train journey comes a ride in a cart or on horseback, then a steep climb up the footpath from Dorfli. Inaccessible as it is, the mountain richly rewards those hardy souls who make the effort to visit it. From it Heidi receives her strength; away from it she grows pale and weak. The good doctor from Frankfurt and Clara each discover there a life-giving potion to heal their emotional and physical ills. The simple, natural diet of bread, cheese, goat's milk, and occasional meat,

coupled with the mountain air, promotes good appetite, sound sleep, and emotional well-being.

In Frankfurt, life is much less rustic, and the book depicts in some detail the home of a wealthy family of the nineteenth century, replete with multiple servants, fine clothes, elaborate meals, and formal etiquette. Heidi feels trapped in the city, however, unable to see the sky or trees or grass.

Moral codes are strict in this period, both in the cities and in the small villages. The work ethic is strong. The A-B-C book from which Peter learns to read reflects clearly the sternness of the time, with beatings, starvation, and other punishments threatened for failure to learn any of the letters. Condemnation for wrongs is the rule in this society, as illustrated by Dorfli's longstanding criticism of Alm Uncle for drinking and gambling in his youth.

Spyri followed the literary conventions of the late nineteenth century in a number of ways. She depicted an invalid and an orphan in many of her stories, *Heidi* included. These stock characters were expected to serve the didactic purpose of depicting death as a "release from earthly misery" and to help convey a spiritual message. Spyri's books manage to be both didactic and imaginative. She has been compared favorably to other noted writers of her time: to Louisa May Alcott for her development of female characters, to Robert Louis Stevenson for her setting and plot, and to Hans Christian Andersen for her treatment of death and spirituality.

Interspersed in the narrative of Spyri's story are frequent lyrical passages. These convey Heidi's overwhelming joy at being alive and at the beauty of the world around

her. Light imagery prevails throughout the story, as manifested in the dazzling light of the mountain sunrises, sunsets, and sparkling stars, all of which are admired and described in vivid color and detail. Clara, who has never seen the sky or the stars before, is entranced to be able to watch the heavens from her bed.

Glowing images also celebrate abstract forms of light, such as the light of joy, peace, faith, and understanding. Even the blind grandmother finds that Heidi's exuberance and the hymns she reads often make it so bright for her that she is quite happy again. The original religious verses that Heidi reads reveal Spyri's poetic talents and convey a deep faith in God that goes beyond any particular denomination. One's heart must be open, however, in.

There are various themes in this children's book but the most prominent one is that of healing and restoration. Most of the characters in this book pursue healing and restoration actively. The grandfather achieves it through his contact with Heidi even though that was the reason he had gone to hide in the mountains in the first place. Eventually, it is Heidi's needs that prompt the old man to venture into the village after years of resisting. The writer also presents Clara's physical condition as an establishment of this theme. Heidi also achieves restoration after she finally learns how to read. This theme continues with Heidi's sleepwalking problem and her healing by going back to the village.

The Alps offer a medium of restoration to both Heidi and Clara. Other prominent themes in *Heidi* include those of Christianity and morality. This theme is particularly stressed among the children's characters in the book. These two themes may be included in the book in a bid to appeal to the children readers. For instance, even when Heidi is

going through formal education she covers religious, biblical, and morality subjects. These themes have adult appeal as exemplified by the passage where Heidi's grandfather enjoys listening to her as she reads stories from the Bible. Furthermore, Clara's grandmother teaches the young crowd the essence of forgiveness when she forgives Peter for pushing Clara's wheelchair downhill.

The book is well endowed with literary devices, most of which go beyond the purpose of a children's book appeal. The metaphor of the man who lives up the hill serves the purpose of indicating that Heidi is elevated into a new and advantageous life. Then onwards, Heidi remains on top of every situation in her life. Symbolism abounds in this book. The windowless apartments in the city symbolise the constrained nature of city life and the lack of enlightenment that comes.

Education is a key theme in *Heidi*, which is clearly presented through the publication titles of the story: *Heidi: Her Years of Wandering and Learning* and *Heidi: How She Used What She Learned*. Here, the education Heidi undergoes in the house is informal, which is classified as informal education: Learnings from incidents, radio, television, films, elders, peers, and parents. Informal learning helps little ones to grow and adapt to the ways and traditions of the society. Interestingly, Heidi's formal education also divulges the class differences between the working-class villagers of the Swiss Alps.

This process is essential for social reproduction – the reproduction of a new generation of workers schooled (disciplined) into accepting their role in society. For instance, schools reward punctuality and obedience and are dismissive of independence, critical awareness and creativity – this mirrors the workplace expectations and they learn

to adapt to the environment in a much better manner. Therefore, Heidi's formal education has had a negative impact on her development since upon returning to the mountains she has lost her wild and carefree nature to some degree and encouraged her Grandfather and Peter to become more civilised and imposes the norms of the society they willingly isolated themselves from in the past, thus demonstrating her internalised values. This especially occurs when she threatens Peter to learn how to read and warns him of how embarrassing it will be "when it comes to your turn you won't be able to read and will make mistakes in your spelling. Then you'll see how they'll make fun of you" (168). However, three years after leaving Heidi, Aunt Dete reappears, having found her niece a job in Frankfurt as a companion to a wheelchair-bound girl, Clara Sesemann. Dete believes the change will be good for Heidi, especially as Grandfather has refused to send her to school or church. Heidi reluctantly goes, and her departure is especially upsetting to Grandfather and Peter's grandmother. Once at the Sesemann house, Heidi learns to love Clara, and she becomes close to Clara's grandmother, who teaches her about God. However, the servants- particularly the coldhearted, stern Miss Rottenmeier - make Heidi unhappy, and she desperately misses the mountains. Ghostly sightings are revealed to be Heidi, whose homesickness has caused her to sleepwalk. A kindly doctor intervenes, and Heidi returns to the mountain to a joyous welcome. At her encouragement, Grandfather prays, and the two later attend church. His return to society is complete when he promises to live with Heidi in the village during the winter. Clara later visits, and a jealous Peter causes her wheelchair to break. With help from Heidi and Peter, however, Clara begins to walk. A thrilled Mr. Sesemann promises Grandfather that he will take care of Heidi when the old man dies.

Originally written in German, *Heidi* was later translated into more than 50 languages. Its popularity rests, in part, on the heartwarming story, as well as Spyri's vivid descriptions of the mountain pastures, Grandfather's cabin, and Heidi's simple life. Like many writers of the time, Spyri believed in letting children be children, away from the restraints of adult rules. Adaptations of *Heidi* included an English-language film (1937) starring Shirley Temple and a TV movie (1968) directed by Delbert Mann; the latter was perhaps best remembered in the United States because coverage of a National Football League game ended in order to air the movie. *Heidi* is popular all over the world. Spyri's psychological insight into the child mind, her humour, and her ability to enter into childish joys and sorrows give her books appeal and lasting value.

When Heidi makes a new friend called Clara, her other friend, Peter, who is Heidi's grandfather's shepherd, starts to become jealous. Clara is stranded in a wheelchair and cannot travel anywhere without it. Peter knows this, so he decides to get rid of the chair; that way, he will be able to spend more time with Heidi. Unfortunately, this plan backfires completely. Instead of making Clara feel isolated, he makes her realise she can walk. It taught about the power of friendship and the main character Heidi is definitely the favourite: a jovial, radiant, chirpy girl who is always grateful and contented, no matter whatever her situation is. Also, the descriptive language adapted by Spyri about the Swiss Alps really inspires the readers to visit the land of Heidi.

Heidi is a book that has managed to retain its literary significance more than a century after it was written. Consequently, the author's contributions should be taken seriously. The use of timeless themes, characterisation, and literary devices has turned this children's book into a literary classic. The tranquility brought about by the references

of nature in this book is also irresistible for the current generation and possibly the next one.

Heidi is a book of absolutes, with definite vices and definite virtues. The chief vices are selfishness, hypocrisy, and materialism, as embodied mostly in the minor characters: Heidi's Aunt Dete, the Sesemanns' head housekeeper Fraulein Rottenmeier, and the villagers. The virtues are equally clear and include love for others, faith in God, humility, and respect for nature.

Spyri seems to advocate that children should be allowed to live unfettered in early life rather than being forced into overly structured educational systems. Lois Keith has posited that *Heidi* is "about giving children independence and the freedom to play" (121) and that "faith in God on its own is not enough to fulfil the writer's purpose, which is to show that children should not be passive receivers of life but must believe in their own power to change things for the better" (96). Thematically, *Heidi* is also clearly a force for positive change. Indeed, Barbara and Richard Almond have asserted that *Heidi* is essentially a "novel about cures" (165).

In his analysis of *Heidi*, Peter Hunt has concluded that, "the message, like that of *The Secret Garden*, is clear: children hold the key, through their purity, to spiritual and physical health" (179).

While noted critics such as Anne Eaton have described the character of Heidi as "so honest, so genuine in her enjoyment of the life in her grandfather's cottage that every detail of that life" (191).

Mary G. Bernath has commented that, “*Heidi* is an old-fashioned book in which the good characters live happily-ever-after. In today’s uncertain world, where both the news and fiction tend to be painfully realistic, it is reassuring to find a story where good people are rewarded and where love and honesty triumph” (548).

Modern readers may find certain aspects of the book a bit overdone. Heidi is almost too full of joy, Peter too simple-minded, and the grandfather too all-knowing and kind beneath his gruff exterior to be totally believable. Yet readers care about these characters deeply and become much involved in the story. Regardless of its arguable literary merit, *Heidi* remains a fixture in children’s literature.

The author mostly uses third-person narration in this book. This style is mostly meant to appeal to young readers. Third person narration allows readers to gain clear mental pictures of Heidi’s life. Also, it allows the readers to relate to the young heroine without having to be too empathetic or sympathetic. The author also uses a simple dialogue to complement the third person narrative. The author of this book was a Swiss citizen, and the book is set in rural Switzerland. This implies that the book is a tribute to Spyri’s rural homeland (Williams 68). This explains the author’s choice of themes and motifs. Nevertheless, the book has managed to retain literary significance more than a century after it was written. The themes in this book are also timeless, and this is what makes the book a classic. The third chapter focuses on the natural and wholesome mountain life which inspires the moral landscape and acts as the regenerative force in the lives of people.

Chapter Three

Nature as the Regenerative Force

Heidi, the tale of childhood life in Switzerland, was one of the most distinct successes that has come into literature. *Heidi* takes place in the Swiss Alps and in nearby Germany, most particularly Frankfurt. The time is the late 1800s, when public opinion and traditional morality dominate daily life. The setting is pastoral in the literal sense, home to a shepherd and goats and filled with abundant flowers, broad meadows, gentle winds, ancient fir trees, and heavy snows. Sunrises and sunsets are always noticed and celebrated, especially by Heidi and her grandfather. Nothing is ever taken for granted.

The wildness of the place often frightens away city visitors. Transportation is difficult, to be sure, for after the train journey comes a ride in a cart or on horseback, then a steep climb up the footpath from Dorfli. Inaccessible as it is, the mountain richly rewards those hardy souls who make the effort to visit it. From it Heidi receives her strength; away from it she grows pale and weak. The good doctor from Frankfurt and Clara each discover there a life-giving potion to heal their emotional and physical ills. The simple, natural diet of bread, cheese, goat's milk, and occasional meat, coupled with the mountain air, promotes good appetite, sound sleep, and emotional well-being.

From the old and pleasantly situated village of Mayenfeld, a footpath winds through green and shady meadows to the foot of the mountains, which on this side look down from their stern and lofty heights upon the valley below. The land grows gradually wilder as the path ascends, and the climber has not gone far before he begins to inhale the fragrance of the short grass and sturdy mountain-plants, for the way is steep and leads directly up to the summits above.

On a clear sunny morning in June two figures might be seen climbing the narrow mountain path; one, a tall strong-looking girl, Dete, the other a child, Heidi, whom she was leading by the hand, and whose little cheeks were so aglow with heat that the crimson color could be seen even through the dark, sunburnt skin. And this was hardly to be wondered at, for in spite of the hot June sun the child was clothed as if to keep off the bitterest frost.

Heidi's grandfather Alm Uncle's hut stood on a projection of the rock, exposed indeed to the winds, but where every ray of sun could rest upon it, and a full view could be had of the valley beneath. Behind the hut stood three old fir trees, with long, thick, unlopped branches. Beyond these rose a further wall of mountain, the lower heights still overgrown with beautiful grass and plants, above which were stonier slopes, covered only with scrub, that led gradually up to the steep, bare rocky summits.

Against the hut, on the side looking towards the valley, Uncle had put up a seat where he used to sit, with his pipe in his mouth and his hands on his knees, quietly looking out, when the children, the goats and Cousin Dete suddenly clambered into

view. Heidi was at the top first. She went straight up to the old man, put out her hand, and said, "Good-evening, Grandfather" (20).

A strong breeze was blowing through the fir trees behind the hut, and there was a rushing and roaring in their topmost branches, Heidi stood still and listened. The sound growing fainter, she went on again, to the farther corner of the hut, and so round to where her grandfather was sitting. Seeing that he was in exactly the same position as when she left him, she went and placed herself in front of the old man, and putting her hands behind her back, stood and gazed at him.

In the evening, the wind began to roar louder than ever through the old fir trees. The sound was delightful to listen, and it filled the heart so full of gladness that she skipped and danced round the old trees, as if some unheard of joy had come to her. The grandfather stood and watched her from the shed.

The sun came climbing up over the mountains at a very early hour during the summer months. The wind grew so tempestuous during the night, and blew in such gusts against the walls, that the hut trembled and the old beams groaned and creaked. It came howling and wailing down the chimney like voices of those in pain, and it raged with such fury among the old fir trees that here and there a branch was snapped and fell. The situation creates fear in the mind of the readers while reading this passage that the child would be frightened.

Outside, the moon was struggling with the dark, fast-driving clouds, which at one moment left it clear and shining, and the next swept over it, and all again was

dark. Just now the moonlight was falling through the round window straight on to Heidi's bed. She lay under the heavy coverlid, her cheeks rosy with sleep, her head peacefully resting on her little round arm, and with a happy expression on her baby face as if dreaming of something pleasant. The old man stood looking down on the sleeping child until the moon again disappeared behind the clouds and he could see no more, then he went back to bed.

Heidi was awakened early the next morning by a loud whistle; the sun was shining through the round window and failing in golden rays on her bed and on the large heap of hay, and as she opened her eyes everything in the loft seemed gleaming with gold. She looked around her in astonishment and could not imagine for a while where she was. But her grandfather's deep voice was now heard outside, and then Heidi began to recall all that had happened: how she had come away from her former home and was now on the mountain with her grandfather instead of with old Ursula.

The latter was nearly stone deaf and always felt cold, so that she sat all day either by the hearth in the kitchen or by the sitting-room stove, and Heidi had been obliged to stay close to her, for the old woman was so deaf that she could not tell where the child was if out of her sight. And Heidi, shut up within the four walls, had often longed to be out of doors. So she felt very happy this morning as she woke up in her new home and remembered all the many new things that she had seen the day before and which she would see again that day, and above all she thought with delight of the two dear goats. Heidi jumped quickly out of bed and a very few minutes sufficed her to put on the clothes which she had taken off the night before, for there

were not many of them. Then she climbed down the ladder and ran outside the hut. There stood Peter already with his flock of goats, and the grandfather was just bringing his two out of the shed to join the others. Heidi ran forward to wish good-morning to him and the goats.

She started joyfully for the mountain. During the night the wind had blown away all the clouds; the dark blue sky was spreading overhead, and in its midst was the bright sun shining down on the green slopes of the mountain, where the flowers opened their little blue and yellow cups, and looked up to him smiling. Heidi went running hither and thither and shouting with delight, for here were whole patches of delicate red primroses, and there the blue gleam of the lovely gentian, while above them all laughed and nodded the tender-leaved golden cistus. Enchanted with all this waving field of brightly-colored flowers, Heidi forgot even Peter and the goats. She ran on in front and then off to the side, tempted first one way and then the other, as she caught sight of some bright spot of glowing red or yellow. And all the while she was plucking whole handfuls of the flowers which she put into her little apron, for she wanted to take them all home and stick them in the hay, so that she might make her bedroom look just like the meadows outside. Peter had therefore to be on the alert, and his round eyes, which did not move very quickly, had more work than they could well manage, for the goats were as lively as Heidi; they ran in all directions, and Peter had to follow whistling and calling and swinging his stick to get all the runaways together again.

Appreciation of nature comes readily to all those on the mountain, especially Heidi and her grandfather. Heidi's exuberance at seeing her first mountain sunset, when "everything is on fire," is sustained throughout the book. The sights and sounds of the mountain continuously beckon her out of doors, and even at night, the stars are in full view from her bed.

Like the goats and the birds, the flowers and the insects, Johanna Spyri's child is a part of nature. Heidi gambols around like a little strong, brown goat, she eats good, simple food and grows and blossoms like the flowers. The Puritan idea of the child as a soul to be saved or damned was losing its power by this time and thinkers like Jean Jacques Rousseau, had begun to develop ideas about the naturalness and simplicity of children. Children were unspoiled until adults made them so and in order to grow into the ideal adult, they needed a childhood in which they could develop a body which was strong and active and a mind unclouded with prejudice.

Heidi was seated on the ground at the foot of a small hill thickly overgrown with sweet smelling prunella; the whole air seemed filled with its fragrance, and Heidi thought she had never smelt anything so delicious. She sat surrounded by the flowers, drawing in deep breaths of the scented air. The scent of the flowers seemed sweeter to her with every breath of wind that wafted it towards her.

The goats also became more orderly in their behavior, for they were beginning to smell the plants they loved that grew on the higher slopes and clambered up now without pause in their anxiety to reach them. The spot where Peter generally halted for his goats to pasture and where he took up his quarters for the day lay at the foot of the

high rocks, which were covered for some distance up by bushes and fir trees, beyond which rose their bare and rugged summits. On one side of the mountain the rock was split into deep clefts, and the grandfather had reason to warn Peter of danger. Having climbed as far as the halting-place, Peter unslung his wallet and put it carefully in a little hollow of the ground, for he knew what the wind was like up there and did not want to see his precious belongings sent rolling down the mountain by a sudden gust. Then he threw himself at full length on the warm ground, for he was tired after all his exertions.

Heidi meanwhile had unfastened her apron and rolling it carefully round the flowers laid it beside Peter's wallet inside the hollow; she then sat down beside his outstretched figure and looked about her. The valley lay far below bathed in the morning sun. In front of her rose a broad snow-field, high against the dark-blue sky, while to the left was a huge pile of rocks on either side of which a bare lofty peak, that seemed to pierce the blue, looked frowningly down upon, her. The child sat without moving, her eyes taking in the whole scene, and all around was a great stillness, only broken by soft, light puffs of wind that swayed the light bells of the blue flowers, and the shining gold heads of the cistus, and set them nodding merrily on their slender stems. Peter had fallen asleep after his fatigue and the goats were climbing about among the bushes overhead.

Heidi had never felt so happy in her life before. She drank in the golden sunlight, the fresh air, the sweet smell of the flowers, and wished for nothing better than to remain there forever. So the time went on, while to Heidi, who had so often

looked up from the valley at the mountains above, these seemed now to have faces, and to be looking down at her like old friends. Suddenly she heard a loud harsh cry overhead and lifting her eyes she saw a bird, larger than any she had ever seen before, with great, spreading wings, wheeling round and round in wide circles, and uttering a piercing, croaking kind of sound above her. They sat and watched the bird, which rose higher and higher in the blue air till it disappeared behind the grey mountain-tops.

These lyrical passages convey Heidi's over-whelming joy at being alive and at the beauty of the world around her. Light imagery prevails throughout the story, as manifested in the dazzling light of the mountain sunrises, sunsets, and sparkling stars, all of which are admired and described in vivid color and detail.

Peter now began suddenly whistling and calling in such a loud manner that Heidi could not think what was happening; but the goats evidently understood his voice, for one after the other they came springing down the rocks until they were all assembled on the green plateau, some continuing to nibble at the juicy stems, others skipping about here and there or pushing at each other with their horns for pastime.

Heidi jumped up and ran in and out among them, for it was new to her to see the goats playing together like this and her delight was beyond words as she joined in their frolics; she made personal acquaintance with them all in turn, for they were like separate individuals to her, each single goat having a particular way of behaviour of its own. Meanwhile Peter had taken the wallet out of the hollow and placed the pieces of bread and cheese on the ground in the shape of a square, the larger two on Heidi's side and the smaller on his own, for he knew exactly which were hers and which his. Then

he took the little bowl and milked some delicious fresh milk into it from the white goat, and afterwards set the bowl in the middle of the square. Now he called Heidi to come, but she wanted more calling than the goats, for the child was so excited and amused at the capers and lively games of her new playfellows that she saw and heard nothing else. But Peter knew how to make himself heard, for he shouted till the very rocks above echoed his voice, and at last Heidi appeared, and when she saw the inviting repast spread out upon the ground she went skipping round it for joy.

The goats were now beginning to climb the rocks again, each seeking for the plants it liked in its own fashion, some jumping over everything they met till they found what they wanted, others going more carefully and cropping all the nice leaves by the way, the Turk still now and then giving the others a poke with his horns. Little Swan and Little Bear clambered lightly up and never failed to find the best bushes, and then they would stand gracefully poised on their pretty legs, delicately nibbling at the leaves. Heidi stood with her hands behind her back, carefully noting all they did. All of a sudden Peter leaped to his feet and ran hastily after the goats. Heidi followed him as fast as she could, for she was too eager to know what had happened to stay behind. Peter dashed through the middle of the flock towards that side of the mountain where the rocks fell perpendicularly to a great depth below, and where any thoughtless goat, if it went too near, might fall over and break all its legs. He had caught sight of the inquisitive Greenfinch taking leaps in that direction, and he was only just in time, for the animal had already sprung to the edge of the abyss. All Peter could do was to throw himself down and seize one of her hind legs. Greenfinch, thus taken by surprise, began bleating furiously, angry at being held so fast and prevented from continuing

her voyage of discovery. She struggled to get loose, and endeavored so obstinately to leap forward that Peter shouted to Heidi to come and help him, for he could not get up and was afraid of pulling out the goat's leg altogether.

Beautiful as all this light may be, it seems almost too much at times for the modern reader. The book tends toward hyperbole, with little subtlety of character or theme. Every thought or feeling is explicit. Heidi's delight at the goats, the sunset, the cheese, the flowers, the goats' milk, even the tumbledown house in Dorfli is portrayed in details so descriptive that they overwhelm and almost embarrass the reader.

Heidi had already run up and she saw at once the danger both Peter and the animal were in. She quickly gathered a bunch of sweet-smelling leaves, and then, holding them under Greenfinch's nose, the day had crept on to its close, and now the sun was on the point of sinking out of sight behind the high mountains. Heidi was again sitting on the ground, silently gazing at the blue bell-shaped flowers, as they glistened in the evening sun, for a golden light lay on the grass and flowers, and the rocks above were beginning to shine and glow. All at once she sprang to her feet,

Peter! Peter! everything is on fire! All the rocks are burning, and the great snow mountain and the sky! O look, look! the high rock up there is red with flame! O the beautiful, fiery snow! Stand up, Peter! See, the fire has reached the great bird's nest! look at the rocks! look at the fir trees! Everything, everything is on fire! (36, 37)

“It is always like that,” (37) said Peter composedly, continuing to peel his stick; “but it is not really fire” (37).

“What is it then?” cried Heidi, as she ran backwards and forwards to look first one side and then the other, for she felt she could not have enough of such a beautiful sight. “What is it, Peter, what is it?” she repeated. “It gets like that of itself,” (37) explained Peter. “Look, look!” cried Heidi in fresh excitement, “now they have turned all rose color! Look at that one covered with snow, and that with the high, pointed rocks! What do you call them?” (37). “Mountains have not any names,” he answered. “O how beautiful, look at the crimson snow! And up there on the rocks there are ever so many roses! Oh! now they are turning grey! Oh! oh! now all the color has died away! it’s all gone, Peter” (37). And Heidi sat down on the ground looking as full of distress as if everything had really come to an end.

“It will come again to-morrow,” said Peter. “Get up, we must go home now” (37). He whistled to his goats and together they all started on their home way. Heidi told him of the mountain with the great snow-field, and how it had been on fire, and had, turned rosy-red and then all of a sudden had grown quite pale again and all the colour had disappeared away. “Is it like that every day, shall we see it every day when we bring the goats up here?” (37) asked Heidi, as she clambered down the mountain at Peter’s side; she waited eagerly for his answer, hoping that he would tell her it was so.

Heidi went on to give him an account of the whole day, and of how delightful it had all been, and particularly described the fire that had burst out everywhere in the

evening. And then nothing would do but her grandfather must tell how it came, for Peter knew nothing about it. The grandfather explained to her that it was the sun that did it. "When he says good-night to the mountains he throws his most beautiful colours over them, so that they may not forget him before he comes again the next day" (39).

Heidi was delighted with this explanation, and could hardly bear to wait for another day to come that she might once more climb up with the goats and see how the sun bid good-night to the mountains. But she had to go to bed first, and all night she slept soundly on her bed of hay, dreaming of nothing but of shining mountains with red roses all over them, among which happy little Snowflake went leaping in and out.

The next morning the sun came out early as bright as ever, and then Peter appeared with the goats, and again the two children climbed up together to the high meadows, and so it went on day after day till Heidi, passing her life thus among the grass and flowers, was burnt brown with the sun, and grew so strong and healthy that nothing ever ailed her. She was happy too, and lived from day to day as free and lighthearted as the little birds that make their home among the green forest trees. Then the autumn came, and the wind blew louder and stronger, and the grandfather would say sometimes, "To-day you must stay at home, Heidi; a sudden gust of the wind would blow a little thing like you over the rocks into the valley below in a moment" (40).

She liked best, it is true, to go out with Peter up to the flowers and the great bird, where there was so much to be seen, and so many experiences to go through

among the goats with their different characters; but she also found her grandfather's hammering and sawing and carpentering very entertaining, and if it should chance to be the day when the large round goat's-milk cheese was made she enjoyed beyond measure looking on at this wonderful performance, and watching her grandfather, as with sleeves rolled back, he stirred the great cauldron with his bare arms. The thing which attracted her most, however, was the waving and roaring of the three old fir trees on these windy days. She would run away repeatedly from whatever she might be doing, to listen to them, for nothing seemed so strange and wonderful to her as the deep mysterious sound in the tops of the trees. She would stand underneath them and look up, unable to tear herself away, looking and listening while they bowed and swayed and roared as the mighty wind rushed through them. There was no longer now the warm bright sun that had shone all through the summer, so Heidi went to the cupboard and got out her shoes and stockings and dress, for it was growing colder every day, and when Heidi stood under the fir trees the wind blew through her as if she was a thin little leaf, but still she felt she could not stay indoors when she heard the branches waving outside.

Then it grew very cold, and Peter would come up early in the morning blowing on his fingers to keep them warm. But he soon left off coming, for one night there was a heavy fall of snow and the next morning the whole mountain was covered with it, and not a single little green leaf was to be seen anywhere upon it. There was no Peter that day, and Heidi stood at the little window looking out in wonderment, for the snow was beginning again, and the thick flakes kept falling till the snow was up to the window, and still they continued to fall, and the snow grew higher, so that at last the

window could not be opened, and she and her grandfather were shut up fast within the hut. Heidi thought this was great fun and ran from one window to the other to see what would happen next, and whether the snow was going to cover up the whole hut, so that they would have to light a lamp although it was broad daylight. But things did not get as bad as that, and the next day, the snow having ceased, the grandfather went out and shoveled away the snow round the house, and threw it into such great heaps that they looked like mountains standing at intervals on either side the hut. And now the windows and door could be opened, and it was well it was so, for as Heidi and her grandfather were sitting one afternoon on their three-legged stools before the fire there came a great thump at the door followed by several others, and then the door opened. It was Peter, who had made all that noise knocking the snow off his shoes; he was still white all over with it, for he had had to fight his way through deep snowdrifts, and large lumps of snow that had frozen upon him still clung to his clothes. He had been determined, however, not to be beaten and to climb up to the hut, for it was a week now since he had seen Heidi.

“Good-evening,” he said as he came in; then he went and placed himself as near the fire as he could without saying another word, but his whole face was beaming with pleasure at finding himself there. Heidi looked on in astonishment, for Peter was beginning to thaw all over with the warmth, so that he had the appearance of a trickling waterfall.

The old fir trees were standing now quite silent, their branches covered with the white snow, and they looked so lovely as they glittered and sparkled in the sunlight

that Heidi jumped for joy at the sight and kept on calling out, "Come here, come here, grandfather! The fir trees are all silver and gold!" (43). The grandfather had gone into the shed and he now came out dragging a large hand-sleigh along with him; inside it was a low seat, and the sleigh could be pushed forward and guided by the feet of the one who sat upon it with the help of a pole that was fastened to the side. After he had been taken round the fir trees by Heidi that he might see their beauty from all sides, he got into the sleigh and lifted the child on to his lap; then he wrapped her up in the sack, that she might keep nice and warm, and put his left arm closely round her, for it was necessary to hold her tight during the coming journey. He now grasped the pole with his right hand and gave the sleigh a push forward with his two feet. The sleigh shot down the mountain side with such rapidity that Heidi thought they were flying through the air like a bird, and shouted aloud with delight. Suddenly they came to a standstill, and there they were at Peter's hut. Her grandfather lifted her out and unwrapped her. "There you are, now go in, and when it begins to grow dark you must start on your way home again." Then he left her and went up the mountain, pulling his sleigh after him.

Quickly the winter passed, and still more quickly the bright glad summer, and now another winter was drawing to its close. Heidi was still as light-hearted and happy as the birds, and looked forward with more delight each day to the coming spring, when the warm south wind would roar through the fir trees and blow away the snow, and the warm sun would entice the blue and yellow flowers to show their heads, and the long days out on the mountain would come again, which seemed to Heidi the greatest joy that the earth could give.

When the March sun had melted the snow on the mountain side and the snowdrops were peeping out all over the valley, and the fir trees had shaken off their burden of snow and were again merrily waving their branches in the air, Heidi ran backwards and forwards with delight first to the goat-shed then to the fir-trees, and then to the hut-door, in order to let her grandfather know how much larger a piece of green there was under the trees, and then would run off to look again, for she could hardly wait till Little pink clouds were floating over the sky, that was growing brighter and bluer with every minute, while the heights and the meadow lands were turning gold under the rising sun, which was just appearing above the topmost peaks. Everything was green and the full beautiful summer had clothed the mountain with grass and flowers.

The early light of morning lay rosy red upon the mountains, and a fresh breeze rustled through the fir trees and set their ancient branches waving to and fro. The sound awoke Heidi and she opened her eyes. The roaring in the trees always stirred a strong emotion within her and seemed to draw her irresistibly to them.

Heidi now led her friend to her favorite spot where she was accustomed to sit and enjoy the beauty around her; Over the heights and over the far green valley hung the golden glory of the autumn day. The great snow-field sparkled in the bright sunlight, and the two grey rocky peaks rose in their ancient majesty against the dark blue sky. A soft, light morning breeze blew deliciously across the mountain, gently stirring the bluebells that still remained of the summer's wealth of flowers, their slender heads nodding cheerfully in the sunshine. Overhead the great bird was flying

round and round in wide circles, but to-day he made no sound; poised on his large wings he floated contentedly in the blue ether.

The waving flowers, the blue sky, the bright sunshine, the happy bird--everything was so beautiful! so beautiful! Her eyes were alight with joy. And now she turned to her friend to see if he too were enjoying the beauty. There was a reddish gold light over the higher peaks; a light breeze springing up and the branches of the fir trees moved gently to and fro the sun was on its way.

The old man stood and watched the green slopes under the higher peaks gradually growing brighter with the coming day and the dark shadows lifting from the valley, until at first a rosy light filled its hollows, and then the morning gold flooded every height and depth--the sun had risen.

Aunt Dete left Heidi in Frankfurt with Clara, a paralysed girl to accompany her in all sort of things. Heidi used to tell Clara the beauty and the pleasant nature of the mountains where she lived with her grandfather. Sometimes she used to feel sad thinking of the mountains, goats, etc., as she was not very comfortable with the city life in Frankfurt, she got disturbed. By the advice of the doctor, she returned to her grandfather in the mountains. Clara missed the companionship of Heidi in Frankfurt. So she wanted to visit Heidi and she came to the mountains where Heidi lived. There, Clara began to enjoy the nature.

Clara's health begins to improve almost from her first breath of mountain air. At her first lunch in the mountains she takes a second helping of golden toasted cheese

and many references are made after this to her increased appetite. At the end of her first day, Clara lies with Heidi on the soft bed in the hayloft and exclaims in delight, “Heidi, it’s just as if we were in a high carriage and were going to drive straight into heaven” (190). This encourages Heidi to deliver a little religious homily in which she tries to explain that seemingly insoluble problem of why people need to pray if God has the future already planned. She tells Clara, “We must never forget to pray, and to ask God to remember us when He is arranging things so that we too may feel safe and have no anxiety about what is going to happen” (190).

The “high life-giving mountain air” gives Clara new energy and she wants to stay forever in that great stillness and beauty. She is almost at the end of her visit before grandfather names the possibility of her walking: “Won’t the little daughter try if she can stand for a minute or two?” (196). Clara attempts to please him, but without success, and she has to content herself with listening to Heidi’s descriptions of the flowers she cannot see for herself and the wonderful light from the evening sun. When Heidi begs her grandfather to push Clara’s wheelchair up the mountain so that they can be with the goats, again he coaxes her with the reply that he will: “But if I do, the little daughter must do something to please me: she must try her best again this evening to stand on her feet” (197).

Until Clara’s arrival, Peter, who is poor, not very bright and often abused by the adults around him, has enjoyed having Heidi as his special friend. He bitterly resents Clara and cannot bear the thought that for the first time that summer Heidi will not be exploring the mountain but sticking by Clara’s side all day long and ignoring

him. Ironically, since all through the book the weak and passive Clara has been presented as someone to be pitied, Clara's wheelchair is to Peter both a symbol of her wealth and superiority and an indispensable part of her ability to stay on the mountain. When he sees it standing ready outside the hut, waiting for Clara to be lifted into it, he regards it as a powerful enemy and thinks that with it gone, Clara will have to go back home: "There stood the chair on its high wheels; Peter seemed to see something proud and disdainful about it, and he glared at it as at an enemy that had done him harm and was likely to do him more still today" (199). In a furious temper, he hurls the wheelchair down the mountain and hiding behind a bush, he watches it racing faster and faster down the hill until it smashes into a hundred pieces. He is sure that "Heidi's friend would be obliged to go away, for she would have no means of going about" (201). Heidi will be free to come out with him again and everything will be all right. But as Johanna Spyri cannot help but remind the reader, "Peter did not consider, or did not know, that when we do a wrong thing trouble is sure to follow" (201). As a moral lesson, Peter's plan is foiled in all respects. He suffers several days of panicky fear and is eventually found out, and Clara is not sent home and is carried onto the high slopes by grandfather, where she will have the best day of her life.

The mountain pastures where the girls are taken becomes their garden of Paradise; nature is at its most perfect. The snowfield sparkles as if set with thousands of gold and silver stars, the sky is dark blue, the mountains lift their lofty heads and the great bird is poised aloft. They are at the top of the world, almost in heaven.

The ending of the book focuses on one smiling face after another, smothering the reader with its overabundance of happiness. This discomfort arises, of course, from more cynical contemporary attitudes in an age when joy and exuberance are distrusted and downplayed. Perhaps the book's lasting appeal comes partly from the very novelty of this unabashed joy and happiness. The fourth chapter focuses on the strength of the bonds of family and friendship.

Chapter Four

Bonds of Family and Friendship

Family is the main building block of a community. Family structure and upbringing determine the social character and personality of any given society. Family is where people all learn love, care, compassion, ethics, honesty, fairness, common sense, reason, peaceful conflict, resolution and respect for ourselves and others, which are the vital fundamental skills and family values, necessary to live an honourable and prosperous life in harmony, in the world community. To have a sense of family values is to have good thoughts, good intentions and good deeds, to love and to care for those whom people are close to and are part of our primary social group, our community, such as children, parents, other family members and friends, and to treat others with the same set of values, the same way people wish to be treated.

Family is important because people need a group of loyal supporters. It matters what people think and feel and nobody cares more about us than the members of our families - at least, that how it should be and it starts from family. The more binding in the family, the better the family will be. It not only gives pleasure or entertainment but also all reality in life; for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do people apart, people need a family and family needs too.

There are four reasons where the familial and friendship bonds are given importance in the novel. The first is the novel has a first-rate social story; it is about the events in the life of a young girl in her grandfather's care, in the Swiss Alps. It also tells the readers about her journey to find the meaning of family. The second reason is about

the value of the family. To have a sense of family values is to have good thoughts, good intentions and good deeds, to love and to care for those whom people are close to and are part of our primary social group, our community, such as children, parents, other family members and friends. And to treat others with the same set of values, the same way people wish to be treated.

The third is the novel has a character feel, it demonstrates a wonderful sense of setting, plot and occasion but what makes this novel so absorbing, and so masterful, is her sense of character. In some magical way, Johanna Spyri manages to make reader feel what it is like to be both a parent and a child, both old and young, both bitter and hopeful.

The fourth reason is this novel is easy to understand for any readers. When people read this novel, people understand the story with all its significant familial and friendship bonds. People not only enjoy reading the novel but also take many messages since this novel also presents the social conflicts.

Friendship means familiar liking of each other's mind. People who are friends talk to each other and spend time together. They trust one another and also help each other when they are in trouble or are hurt. Friends are people that can be looked up to and trusted. Usually friends have similar interests. A friend is the one who admires a person's skill and helps or encourages them to make the right choices and do not get into any trouble at all.

The strength of the bond of friendship between two people can vary. If the bond is very strong, they are called best friends. This can usually be achieved by possessing the

elements of friendship, by being kind, generous, loyal, honest and by having fun. With these qualities one can truly enjoy the bliss of friendship.

There are expectations, demands and complaints in friendship too. If friends don't match with each other's expectations, it does not mean they will break the friendship. It is all about understanding, realising and helping whenever possible. Friendship is both good and necessary. Man cannot live all alone. He is a social being. He needs someone to share his joys and sorrows. Generally, it is only people of similar age, character and background, mentality, etc., who can understand him and his problems. Friends are needed for support and for sharing.

The beautiful and charming story is about an orphaned girl named Heidi who is very caring and loving about others and friendly towards everyone. She is sent away from her aunt to live with her grandfather in the Swiss Alps. Heidi's grandfather is a cold-hearted and mean man at the beginning. However, as they get to know each other, the love between Heidi and her grandfather grows so strong they cannot be separated. Every morning up in the mountains with Peter, the goat-herder and Heidi's best friend, is a day to look forward to.

Life in the mountains is perfect and it all seems too good to be true, and it is when Heidi is suddenly taken away from her beloved grandfather and mountains to be a playmate for Clara, an invalid young girl who can't walk. Heidi has to travel very far to Frankfurt where Clara lives, and is dismayed by the grey, dreary and gloomy streets. Heidi makes a good playmate and friend to Clara, but she can't get over her homesickness and longs for the mountains where everything is green and fresh.

Heidi's intractable homesickness leads to episodes of sleepwalking where she goes downstairs and opens the front door, which the household initially takes as the work of ghosts, and the family doctor recommends she be sent home as a matter of urgency before she becomes seriously ill. She returns to the mountains laden with presents for her friends, but finds one of her greatest pleasures is reading hymns to Peter's blind grandmother, who can no longer do so for herself. Her faith in God speaks to something in the Alm-Uncle, and he returns to the Christian faith. He accompanies Heidi to church, and that winter takes accommodation in the village so that she can attend school.

Back on the mountain again, Heidi renews her friendships. She is now happily able to read to Peter's blind grandmother, a source of great joy for them both. She also encourages her grandfather to again be social, even persuading him to move down to the village during the wintertime so that Heidi may attend school. Her grandfather is accepted back into the village and the church community. He gradually becomes happier within himself.

Heidi's return and her newfound enjoyment of reading prompt Alm-Onji to partially restore a ruined house down in the village, where they retire the following winter so that Heidi can start going to school. Over the course of the season, Heidi and Alm-Onji become friendly with the villagers, and Peter builds his own shed and wins a local race. The subsequent spring, they return to the mountain in the Alps, bidding farewell to their new friends.

Heidi and Clara continue to keep in touch and exchange letters. In Frankfurt, Clara, who has been longing to see her friend again, reminds her father of his promise to her, but he reminds her that the conditions in the Swiss Alps may be too harsh for her to

handle. The doctor is sent to the Alps in her place, to inspect the area and determine whether it is an appropriate environment for a crippled, sick young girl. Heidi, Peter, Alm-Onji, and the limitations of the terrain convince the doctor that this may be just the place for Clara to try her legs again. In due course, Clara comes to the Alps with Miss Rottenmeier, who shows a clear disapproval of the rustic conditions and an open fear of animals. However, Clara's grandmother soon arrives, and after seeing first-hand the vast improvement in Clara's condition, sends Miss Rottenmeier home, commending Clara to the Alm-Onji's care before departing herself. After having established that Clara's legs are capable of functioning, the children and Alm-Onji begin to work on Clara's physical therapy. Eventually, Clara is able to walk without assistance and returns home with her father and grandmother, promising that she will return the following spring to be with her friends again.

Heidi and Clara are two contrasting characters. With all those differences between Heidi and Clara, the writer is interested in making a deeper study to find out how they make friendship with each other. The writer is interested in figuring out the reasons they have in determining their relationship while they have different characters and backgrounds. It is also interesting to see that friendship is able to change someone's life.

Heidi is a brilliant book. The caring, courageous and funny Heidi, inspired everyone to be more open to and caring for others. The part where Heidi saved up all her soft, white rolls for Grandma so that she wouldn't have to chew the hard bread or when the housekeeper screamed after seeing the basketful of kittens which Heidi had rescued from the top of the clock tower depict Heidi's caring nature. Spyri writes about relationships and feelings between the characters, which we all experience. The

relationship between Heidi and her grandfather was undoubtedly strong, while the relationship between Heidi and Peter was strong too until Clara came along. When Clara came, everything changed for Peter who became jealous because he felt that he was not getting Heidi's complete attention. Peter misses Heidi terribly, and there's a part in the book where we are not sure if they will ever be best friends again.

Heidi taught an important lesson that if one wants a friend, one has to be a friend first. Heidi was written over 130 years ago, but children can relate to her story today just as easily as they did when the book was first written. Heidi and Clara soon form a close friendship and have many scrapes and adventures. The city is in stark contrast to the natural setting of the Alps. To Heidi's eyes, there are no trees or gardens, only buildings. Progress, and modern technology are coming to the urbanised world, however, Heidi's home in the Alps is still isolated from technological advancements.

Throughout the novel, Heidi cares for others. Knowing that granny (her friend Peter's blind grandmother) has trouble eating and can only afford hard, stale bread, Heidi hoards the soft, fresh white rolls that are available in her new home. She wants to take them back to granny.

Towards the end of the novel, Clara comes to visit Heidi on the mountain. Clara's stay on the mountain, and exposure to healthy air and wholesome food, enable her to learn to walk. By the end of the novel, Heidi's naturally sunny and positive disposition and her gentle friendship, help heal Clara and also her grandfather's bitterness.

Consequently, the friendship and intimacy between Heidi and Clara was highlighted by means of the illustrations. This procedure can readily be understood in the

context of the alternative girls' culture before the World War II which praised the passionate relationships or sisterhood between girls as an alternative to the patriarchal gender norms of the time.

It might well be noted that the Christianity of Spyri's original text was pictured as a positive factor in the Japanese versions, due to its affinity to certain aspects of the girls' culture. Shortly after the war, many new translations and adaptations were published, and it brought about hundreds of *Heidi* variations in Japan. The most influential among them was the animation series «Arupusu no Shōjo Haiji» [*Heidi, the Girl of the Alps*] (1974).

As can be imagined from the title, it stood squarely in the tradition of girls' culture from the first half of the 20th century. For one thing, this animated series emphasised Clara's role. For another, surprisingly many Christian elements from the original text were preserved, for example, the scene where Heidi reads a hymn for Peter's blind grandmother. The German synchronised version (1976/77), which replaced this hymn with a "Swiss fairy tale," eliminated religious elements in the series totally.

Having enjoyed great success with the publication of *Heidi* Johanna Spyri is reunited with her old friend Betsy Meyer, who encourages her to write a sequel, telling what happens when Clara visits Heidi in the mountains.

Literature in its many manifestations or arrangements reproduces and articulates the social condition of the society and the life of the author. An author is a member of a society that he or she is influenced by his or her society. Literature is an expression of society (Wellek 83). A writer of a literary work produces an artwork via occurrence and taking apart in a social circumstance that he or she will use as the foundation of the work

material or inspiration of the work he or she creates. For this reason, the work he or she made is the work that is the result of the interaction between the writer and the life of the writer.

An artwork is shaped by the writer as the means and resources of his or her idea to articulate the response to the circumstance where he or she lives. It is obviously understood that the writer cannot be estranged from his or her surroundings or society. For this reason, every person acts or behaves as a member of society in the form of persevering or disposing the cultural manner as well as tradition which the writer incorporates as intended issues and inspiration in creating a work of art. A writer will responsively send and bring the issues of support or reject the upcoming phenomena in the coverage of everyday situation in the society. The responses will be efforts in searching or finding the designation of the phenomena in society. A writer attempts to figure out the development occurred in society which he or she experiences in real life into his or her literary work. In other words, a literary work reflectively brings and provides issues and the culture of the members of the society which the writer experiences in his real life into light. A writer is not only influenced by society: he or she influences it.

Art does not merely reproduce life but also shapes it (Wellek 90). A work of art replicates the life of the writer, since work of art is like a mirror that reveals the writer's civilisation that provides a response toward the social change in the society. Hence, doing a research on work of art is an important thing to do, for literary work is the reflection and answer of the writer to the personal manner as an associate of the society that

accordingly carries an explanation to the social occurrence and personal manner that happen in the society.

The social life in the society is the real source of an author in making his or her art work to be reflective to the condition he or she feels in the real life. Hence, explanation or conclusion or to the culture and phenomena happened in the society will be articulated within the artwork of the author. For this reason, the responses he or she undergoes in the society will be reflected well in the artwork of the author as the responses of the author. Therefore, the society will recognise and be aware of the things that happened in the society where they live in.

For this reason, the society will be more conscious of their social functions that reflect how the phenomena in the society is defined and concluded as a wrapping up of the relative definition of the social condition in the society which is socially reflected in the novel. The following chapter sums up the precepts dealt in all the preceding chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

Heidi is a tribute to Spyri's rural homeland. The first chapter discusses the author's choice of themes and motifs that have managed to retain literary significance more than a century after it was written. In this wonderful novel, Johanna Spyri compares life in the nineteenth century rural Swiss Alps with life in the urban city of Frankfurt, Germany, as she shares the experience of a Heidi, the kind-hearted child. *Heidi* is a book of absolutes, with definite vices and definite virtues.

The virtues are equally clear and include love for others, faith in God, humility, and respect for nature. The good people are Heidi and her grandfather, Peter's blind grandmother, Herr Sesemann, his invalid daughter Clara. The chief vices are selfishness, hypocrisy, and materialism, as embodied mostly in the minor characters: Heidi's Aunt Dete, the Sesemanns' head housekeeper Fraulein Rottenmeier, and the villagers.

The main character in this book is Heidi, a young orphaned girl who is initially taken care of by her aunt, Dete. When her aunt's life is strained by her career, she decides to take Heidi to live with her grandfather. Her grandfather leads a reclusive and cynical life on a farm next to her aunt's village. Her aunt then leaves for Frankfurt to take care of her work requirements.

When living with her grandfather, Heidi's charming innocence almost manages to change her grandfather's cynical nature. However, her grandfather is too protective of the young Heidi, and he does not allow her to go to school in a faraway village. Instead, he

lets her tend the sheep with a young herd boy named Peter. Heidi becomes accustomed to this life, and she is very comfortable here.

Three years later, her aunt comes back from Frankfurt and takes the young Heidi with her. At Frankfurt, Heidi is supposed to help a young paralysed girl named Clara. Heidi and Clara become good friends. She also learns to read during her stay at Clara's household. Heidi's main challenge is learning how to keep up with the mannerisms of her new abode.

Consequently, she finds herself constantly clashing with strict housekeeper. Heidi's struggles culminate in homesickness that eventually deteriorates. She is then sent back to her grandfather's cottage where she is reunited with Peter. Afterward, Clara visits Heidi at her grandfather's farm. Her close friendship with Heidi makes Peter jealous. Out of this jealousy, Peter pushes her wheelchair down the mountain. This dark act turns out well when Clara's lack of means prompts her to try to walk on her own and with good results. When Peter is found out to have been the one who pushed the wheelchair away, Clara's grandmother forgives him, and it all ends well.

Heidi shows that Christian virtues can be evident anywhere and in anyone, as seen in the actions of Heidi, Clara, and in even Grandfather. Heidi practises several Christian virtues. She is obedient when her aunt, Dete, brings little Heidi to her grandfather. Heidi does not know her grandfather and she does not want to live with this man she doesn't know. But she goes with Aunt Dede and over time learns to love her Grandfather.

Heidi's cheerful ways are helpful when she is in Frankfort. Heidi helps cheer up the crippled girl, Clara. There are multiple times when she makes Clara laugh by just

being herself. Heidi truly possesses Christian virtues. Heidi's grandfather is a kind person in many ways. He shows kindness when he lets Heidi live with him. He had lived alone for a long time and does not want a little girl to live with him. None the less he allows her into his home and eventually into his heart. His kind generosity is displayed as he rebuilds Grandmother's little house. At the command of Heidi, he rebuilds all the shaky parts of Grandmother's shabby little house.

Grandfather is also kind when he helps teach Clara how to walk. He is very gentle while taking care of her. Because of his kind yet authoritative leadership Clara begins to walk. Heidi's Grandfather proves to be a good Christian gentleman. The Christian virtues displayed in the lives of Heidi, Clara, and in the end, Grandfather, prove that there are no limitations when love of God is shared. When Dete took Heidi up to the mountain, Heidi obediently follows. Clara is kind to others especially to Heidi and Grandmother.

Grandfather shows kindness toward Heidi as he learns to love again, to Clara as he teaches her to trust herself, and to Grandmother when he makes her home a more livable place.

In the second chapter the characters, themes and the description of the nature are analysed based on the ethos of childhood. The wildness of the place often frightens away city visitors. Upon returning from Frankfurt, for example, Sebastian lets Heidi go on alone from the Mayenfeld train station, "glad of having no tiring and dangerous journey on foot before him" (118). Transportation is difficult, to be sure, for after the train journey comes a ride in a cart or on horseback, then a steep climb up the footpath from Dorfli. Inaccessible as it is, the mountain richly rewards those hardy souls who make the effort to visit it. From it Heidi receives her strength; away from it she grows pale and

weak. The good doctor from Frankfurt and Clara each discover there a life-giving potion to heal their emotional and physical ills. The simple, natural diet of bread, cheese, goat's milk, and occasional meat, coupled with the mountain air, promotes good appetite, sound sleep, and emotional well-being.

In Frankfurt, life is much less rustic, and the book depicts in some detail the home of a wealthy family of the nineteenth century, replete with multiple servants, fine clothes, elaborate meals, and formal etiquette. Heidi feels trapped in the city, however, unable to see the sky or trees or grass.

Moral codes are strict in this period, both in the cities and in the small villages. The work ethic is strong. The A-B-C book from which Peter learns to read reflects clearly the sternness of the time, with beatings, starvation, and other punishments threatened for failure to learn any of the letters. Condemnation for wrongs is the rule in this society, as illustrated by Dorfli's longstanding criticism of Alm Uncle for drinking and gambling in his youth.

Heidi's main theme is the restorative and healing power of nature. Up on the mountain peak where the grandfather lives, all is pure. The air is crisp and invigorating, and the discerning goats saunter about picking the finest herbs to eat, thereby ensuring they produce the choicest milk. The sun always shines and it never seems to rain. Every moment Heidi spends on the alp is a guarantee of mental and physical health, qualities that anyone who ascends can enjoy.

A subset to this benevolent nature is a Christian morality that runs right throughout the book. Heidi's first and most important moral lessons are about the

inherent goodness of the Christian God. When Heidi learns to read, the first things she reads are Bible stories. She ends up almost an accidental preacher when she reads from her story book the tale of the Prodigal son to her grandfather. This has such a stirring effect that the old man is prompted to abandon his reclusive lifestyle and descend the mountain to make friends with the village people.

By the end of the novel, the two themes – God and benevolent nature – have been virtually wound up into one. The healing powers of nature – sunshine, fresh herbs and sweet goat’s milk – are really the sublime workings of God. The reader who can’t accept these basic precepts, or can’t at least appreciate their aesthetic sense, will struggle with *Heidi*.

Overall, the reason for the novel’s ongoing appeal is its authenticity. Johanna Spyri in essence wrote *Heidi* as a hymn to her native Switzerland. A deep love of the place is what most informs *Heidi*, with themes of religion and moral good built around an incorruptible nature. This is a Rousseauist view of nature, with all essentially benevolent and good, as opposed to a cruel, Sade-like nature, “red in tooth and claw” (56) as the poet Tennyson characterised it.

In the third and fourth chapters, the nature of the hills and the relationship between the characters are dealt respectively discussing at length the natural and the moral code and the bonds of family and friendship. Interspersed in the narrative of Spyri’s story are frequent lyrical passages. These convey Heidi’s overwhelming joy at being alive and at the beauty of the world around her. Light imagery prevails throughout the story, as manifested in the dazzling light of the mountain sunrises, sunsets, and sparkling stars, all of which are admired and described in vivid colour and detail. Clara,

who has never seen the sky or the stars before, is entranced to be able to watch the heavens from her bed.

Glowing images also celebrate abstract forms of light, such as the light of joy, peace, faith, and understanding. Even the blind grandmother finds that Heidi's exuberance and the hymns she reads often make it so bright for her that she is quite happy again. The original religious verses that Heidi reads reveal Spyri's poetic talents and convey a deep faith in God that goes beyond any particular denomination. One's heart must be open.

Heidi is a very touching story which depicts the way Heidi, the little girl manages to cope with her primary tears and the anxiety of a parentless child who has been moved from one place to another for her upbringing. The theme in this story is abandonment and the way it is managed by each party.

Abandonment is one's first fear. It is a primary fear – a universal fear in the human experience. As babies, we cry in our cribs, terrified when mother leaves the room, for fear she may never come back. Abandonment is the fear that we are going to be left all alone for ever, with no one there to protect us and satisfy our urgent needs. For the new-born, maintaining the attachment to the primary care giver is necessary for the actual survival.

Heidi introjects the message that one must be grateful with the price of letting go of one's own needs. She tends to play the role of the rescuer. Although only a child of five, she is concerned with Clara's health, with Peter's grandmother's health, with her

house and she is preoccupied that Peter's grandmother should have fresh bread at all times.

This means that the original book has survived multiple mutilation attempts by films and television adaptations. The themes in this book are also timeless, and this is what makes the book a classic. The tranquility brought about by the references of nature in this book is also irresistible for the current generation and possibly the next one. About 25 films or television productions of the original story have been made. The *Heidi* films were popular far and wide, becoming a huge hit, and the Japanese animated series became iconic in several countries around the world. The only incarnation of the Japanese-produced animated TV series to reach the English language was a dubbed feature-length compilation movie using the most pivotal episodes of the television series, released on video in the United States in 1985. Although the original book describes Heidi as having dark, curly hair, she is usually portrayed as blonde.

If Heidi is so popular today, it is because it demonstrates an ecological sensibility, long before the term was coined, which chimes with current health trends, according to professor Jean-Michel Wissmer. "Everywhere we turn someone is trying to sell us the mountains with the claim that the air is purer, the flowers more beautiful and the sun brighter there" (2) said Wissmer, the author of a new book on *Heidi*.

And then there is the novel's somewhat religious line: to love one another. Wissmer opined that "In many Heidi adaptations, this message has often been brushed aside for fear of being old-fashioned. But in today's fragmented society, there is a need for a return to traditional values - traditional values that are faithfully represented by Heidi" (3).

The little girl from the Swiss canton of Graubunden is such a humanitarian that she is practically deserving of a Red Cross armlet, believes Gerard Demierre. “Heidi belongs to two [different] Swiss landscapes: the Alps and the mind,” he noted.

The first is the envy of the whole world. People everywhere project their dreams of beauty on this alpine landscape. The second landscape is more local. It’s to do with our humanitarian impulses and captures many a heart because of this.

There is indeed something very appealing about the destitute orphan who rushes to the rescue of Clara, a 12-year-old German girl who is very rich, disabled and lonely. To help her escape her suffering, Heidi invites her to join her at home in Switzerland.

Today there are dozens of Heidi films and Japanese manga animations. Arguably the most famous film version has been the 1937 classic starring Shirley Temple. “What appeals to Americans, who like to accentuate the positive, is Heidi's optimism,” (2) said Wissmer. “Heidi no longer belongs to Johanna Spyri. She belongs to the whole world. In this sense, she is a myth. She is even giving Harry Potter a run for his money. She is the kind of heroine who eclipses her author” (2). Johanna Spyri’s *Heidi* has been published in 50 languages and is reportedly the most translated book after the Bible and Don Quixote.

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wholesome-message-still-winning-fans/33091214](http://swissinfo.ch/eng/culture/enduring-story_heidi-s-wholesome-message-still-winning-fans/33091214)

TRAUMATIC REVERBERATION OF MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S

ANIL'S GHOST

A Project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

Manonmaniam Sundaranar University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

S. AMUTHA BHARATHI – 19APEN02



P.G and Research Department of English

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

April 2021

CONTENTS

DECLARATION

CERTIFICATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	
Two	A Substantive Critical Scrutiny on <i>Anil's Ghost</i>	
Three	Effects of Post colonialism in Ondaatje's <i>Anil's Ghost</i>	
Four	Enigma of Identity	
Five	Summation	
	Work Cited	

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project work entitled **Traumatic Reverberation of Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the Degree of Master of Arts, is my genuine effort and that , it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar.

Thoothukudi

S. Amutha Bharathi

April 2021

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project work entitled **Traumatic Reverberations of Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in a partial fulfillment of the requirements of **Manonmaniam Sundaranar University** for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature, is a work done by S. Amutha Bharathi, during the year 2020-2021 and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title

Mrs. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department

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Guide

EXAMINER

Dr. Sr. A.S.J. Lucia Rose

Principal

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am extremely grateful to the Lord Almighty for His guidance and grace in completing this project successfully during the year 2020-2021.

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I am indebted to my parents for the great support and the good education they have provided to me. I also thank them for their trust, moral support and benevolence.

PREFACE

Michael Ondaatje is one of the Canada's most important contemporary writers and one of the country's biggest cultural experts. Due to the phenomenal success of his Booker Prize- winning *The English Patient* and the more recent *Anil's Ghost* Ondaatje is best known as a novelist. Michael Ondaatje in his novel *Anil's Ghost* seems to be dealing with the sense of belongingness and alienation as experienced by the natives and the non-residential Sri Lankan people.

The first chapter elucidates the general introduction of the author, a detailed analysis of the contemporary writers and their works and throws lights on Michael Ondaatje's life, works and achievement in literature

The second chapter gives a brief overview of the novel "*Anil's Ghost*".

The third chapter deals with effects of post colonialism in the country Sri Lanka. It describes the involvement of common man in the forensic team in quest for the truth that took place in Sri Lanka during the civil war.

The fourth chapter deals with the identical crisis where Anil's part serves to underline her subordinate female status preceding picking up her name and it additionally uncovers an old type of women's activist protection from man centric control.

The fifth chapter sums all the aspects up, dealt in the preceding chapters.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a work of art which explicates the author's own intentions. Literature can be defined generally as a body of written works that is written and produced in a country, language or age for a specific purpose such as information, education or entertainment to the reader, which can be fictional or non-fictional in nature.

Fictional literature is imaginary composed writing or work of an art that is meant to provide information, education and entertainment to the reader. In other words, fictional literature is based on writer imagination rather than reality. Non-fictional literature is factual writing or written words that can be proved as it provides real spaces, events, characters, times or reality rather than imaginary things. Many literatures emerged slowly from all the corners of the world. There are many literatures such as American Literature, African Literature, British Literature, German Literature, Russian Literature, Canadian Literature etc.

Canadian literature is the body of written works produced by Canadians reflects the country's dual origin and its official bilingualism, the literature of Canada can be split into two major divisions: English and French. Canadian writing began as an imitative colonial literature; it has steadily developed its own natural characteristics, because of the huge immigrations of New England puritans from 1760 and later of American loyalists during the revolution. Canadian literature followed U.S until the confederation in 1867. From the beginning of European colonization in the 1600's until national hood and

various factors affected culture development in the territory now known as Canada. From colonial times onwards, European Canadians were divided into two distinct populations.

Bruce King depicts that, Canadian literature goes from local humor through an early internationalism, historical romances, stories of provincial and settled life, realism and a new nationalism in the early 1940s'. Robert Krotsch, an influential post-modernist writer states that Canadian literature evolved directly from Victorian during its colonial period and underwent a sudden progress and its literature broke open the narrow frontiers of modernism thereby emerging as post- modernism when the country is free from its colonial identity. This led the Canadian writers to realize that the type of modern literature they accomplished responded more to systemization and classification and therefore wanted to liberate creative writing from additional sales of composition. They did not follow the maxim that literature must reflect the social, political and historical reality of their age. On the other hand, the reality they created was more or less independent of the impersonal reality around. Their choice of characters from common folks and a less traditional aspect of mythology are clearly described in their literature.

Though Douglas Le Pan perceives that Canada is a country without any mythology, the Canadian writers have been attempting to discover its roots and to trace and interpret its growth. Thus by examining the history of the inhabitants, the achievements of its pioneers, and its society, they are creating a mythology. Among these mythmakers who seek knowledge about the origins, Margaret Atwood established her own stand. Canadian women who were "astonished amused, and frightened in the period before the First World War, as Barbara Godard remarks, transformed themselves into the "new women" as a result of the Suffrage Movement in Canada during the late nineteenth

and early twentieth century. This led more women to take up writing. They sketched the strong desires of the “new women” to be free and liberated from their limited, restricted and socio-cultural society.

In the year that followed the Second World War and in the post-war period of 1960's the Canadian women began to assert their feminine sensibility and their opposition to the patriarchal system. The Women's Movement in 1960s served as a catalyst and brought about a greater awareness and contribution to strengthen their quest for cultural identity. At the end of 15th century, the European settlers soon arrived with an interest in trade of converting the indigenous people to Christianity. Unknowingly, the settlers began to fashion a new society, but a literary dimension for this society grew slowly. By the early 17th century both Newfoundland and French territory in Canada were home to playwrights, poets and culturally active church men and women. An Acadian culture development under French influence, and immigration from Scotland in the 1700's brought Gaelic speakers and a Gaelic tradition of oral poetry to the region. The late 18th century brought two main stimuli. The first was a British victory over French forces in Quebec in the battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759; the British' takeover of most of the New France which became official in 1763. The second was the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1755, which soon drew many Americans who remained loyal to Britain to Canada. Canadian fiction in English had its origin at this time. *The history of Emily Montague* (1769) by Frances Brooke is considered as the first Canadian as well as the first worthy American novel. The novel provides a portrait of 18th century Canada while establishing a female literacy voice early in English Canadian writing. During the 19th century, Canadian writers started attempting new forms and addressing new subjects.

At first, writers turned to narratives that recorded exploration, settlement and survival. By the end of century, the range of genres and topics has broadened considerably to encompass social issues of the day from the politics of independence to the rights of women-historical romance, comedies of manners and lyric poetry about the transcendence of nature.

The second half of the 20th century witnessed increasingly rapid culture ferment and social transformation as access to media communication introduced into the Canadian scene, a growing multiplicity of voices, languages and perspective. Various modes of debate, dissent, alliance and identification- combined with vigorous experimentation with forms and styles led to the emergence of a distinctively Canadian multiculturalism. Instead of forcing a unified national consciousness of diversity, as happened in the United States, multiculturalism in Canada produced a literature that challenged and reassessed ways in which nation can accommodate that diversity.

Canadian Literature is inextricably enmeshed with the land. Margaret Atwood in her novel *Survival*, states that the central symbol for Canadian literature is survival. She says that almost all Canadian writing deals with the idea of survival and failure. Surviving too, according to her, is not a happy outcome but seen as a postponement of the inevitable. To understand this phenomenon it is essential to look at the history of Canada.

Canada was discovered in 1490, when John Cabot, under commission from King Henry VII, reached New Found land. Not much was done in Canada until 1534 when Jacques Cartier explored the St. Lawrence region and 1608 when Samuel De Champlain established French Colony in Quebec. The French conducted fur trade with the help of

the Native Indians. The British set up the Hudson Bay Company in 1670. This marked the beginning of English settlements in Canada. The years that followed were marked by conflict as every war fought in Europe between the British and the French had consequences in all their colonies.

The American Revolution, 1776, resulted in the settlement of British Loyalists into Canada. They settled in provinces close to Great Lakes. Pioneers from Europe moved further into Canada establishing provinces to the east. There was constant interaction with the Native Indians. This contact proved disastrous to the indigenous population as they fell in prey to diseases like influenza and small pox. This drop in the native population resulted in the establishment of settler colonies. These settlers persevered in spite of extreme climatic conditions, unfamiliar terrain and encounters with strange and wild animals and birds.

The settlers' first encounter with the land of Canada was its extreme climate and unfamiliar flora and fauna. The early attempts to create farmlands, to domesticate the animals found there were failures. Thus, greatly discouraged many moved to the civilized land of the USA to the south or back preserved and created a homestead, a country. Lorenzo Veracini in his work, *Settler Colonialism; A Theoretical Overview*, describes a settler colony involving three aspects. He illustrates that when a foreigner makes a permanent move to a newly discovered land, develops communities there and also gains supremacy over an indigenous people such a colony is a settler colony. Canada is thus, a settler colony like Australia or the USA. However, it differs from both countries because Australia and the USA revolted against their colonial masters and established themselves as independent countries, their literature was also recognized.

The Pre-Confederation period had the first stirring of a poetic culture before Canada became a nation. This was the beginning of Canadian poetry spanning from the later years of the eighteenth century to the Confederation of 1867. The poetry of this period dealt with the life of the early Canadian settlers. The Pre-Confederation poets expressed this sense of loss and displacement of an immigrant and the excitement of discovery of an explorer. They depicted the hardships and difficulties of the early settlers and hatched a graph of rise and progress of a new country. Besides this, they also focused on the prospects of the processer of a new country. This phase includes poets such as Robert Hayman, Joseph Stan bury, Standish O'Grady, Oliver Goldsmith, Charles Heavysege, Charles Sangster and Charles Mair. However, significant contribution to Canadian poetry was made by the three Charles. Two other writers of significance are Rosanna Leprohon for her serialized novel *The Manor House of De Villerai* (1859-1860) publishes in the Montreal *Family Herald* depicting events from the French Canadian point of view and Susanna Moodie for her best known book *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852), a mixture of autobiographical narrative and poetry.

The second phase of Canadian Literature is called the Confederation period which heralded the emergence of a national literature. During the time of the Confederation, Canada gained poets who were national, Charles G.D. Roberts, his cousin Bliss Carman, Archibald Lampman and D.C. Scott. They drew on the Romantic and Victorian heritage of Britain and America and that was why their work became imitative in nature. They continued the themes of the Pre-Confederation literature and endeavored to investigate the experience the early settlers had. These experiences of the early settlers gave a

consciousness of exile and isolation, a sense of inchoate identity and ambivalent feelings about nature that seemed hostile and indifferent.

By the 1940's young writers had come to realize the need to break away from the Confederation writers and discover a new voice. Smith and the other writers of the Montreal group heralded Modernism and Imagism in Canadian Literature through their works. *News of Phoenix* (1943) and *Poems: New and Collected* (1967) and A J M Smith's collection of poetry. He is known for his anthologies they were attempts to project a Canadian voice. *The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English and French* (1960) is an important anthology as it acknowledges French Canadian writing along with English. Sinclair Ross's *As for Me and My House* (1941) is a landmark in Modern Canadian fiction. Lucy Maud Montgomery's beloved children's book *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), Frederick Philip Grove's *Settlers of the Marsh* (1925) and *Fruits of the Earth* (1933) are some significant contribution of Canadian Fiction.

Post Colonial Period is the most progressive in the history of Canadian writing be it poetry, drama or fiction. Canadian authors have come to recognize themselves and their language and have dealt with both in the most original ways. Margaret Atwood, Margaret Lawrence and Alice Munro made important contributions to feminist literature. Authors like Yann Martel, Rudy Wiebe and Michael Ondaatje experimented with forms of fiction writing pushing its boundaries to accommodate a unique Canadian experience. Maria Campbell's *Half-Breed* (1973) and Lee Maracle's *Bobbie Lee, Indian Rebel* (1975, rev. ed. 1990), are key genres in First Nations writing representing the voice of the Native Indians. Chinese Canadian perspectives are presented in Wayson Choy's *The Jade Peony* (1995). Larissa Lai's multilayered exploration of lesbian awakening, *When Fox Is a*

Thousand (1995) and Sky Lee's *Disappearing Moon Café* (1990) created a new space in Canadian literature. Rohinton Mistry's *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (1987), *Such a Long Journey* (1991), *A Fine Balance* (1995) and *Family Matters* (2001) are set mostly in Mumbai among the Parsi community, while Anita Rau Bandai's novel *Tamarind Mem* (1996) and *The Hero's Walk* (2000) portray the cross – culture effect on Indian Families in India and Canada.

The literary achievement of the last decades of the 20th century is firmly rooted in Canada's literary past. It is the harvest of many decades of thoughtful cultivation. Most Canadian Literature is written in English or French, other language which it appears include Gaelic, German, Icelandic, Ukrainian, Yiddish and many languages of Canada's original inhabitants among them Cree, Haida, Inuktitut and Ojibwa. Philip Brooks illustrates that, No man or woman can be strong, gentle, pure and good without the world being better for it and without someone being helped but comforted by the very existence of that goodness.

Canada's literature, whether written in English or French often reflects the Canadian perspective on nature, frontier life and Canada's ethnic and cultural diversity are reflected, with many of its most prominent writers focusing on the ethnic life. The two early important novelist were Morley Callaghan in English and Gabrielle Roy in French. Failure is one of the themes in Canadian Literature. Failure and futility feature as themes in many notable works for instance *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (1984) by Timothy Findley. Humor is often laced with serious subject matter. Often Mid anti- Americanism, in the form of gentle satire is the main theme. Sometimes perceived as malicious, often presents a friendly rivalry between two nations. Since World War II, multiculturalism has

been an important theme. Writers using this theme include Mordecai Richler and Margaret Laurence. Reference to nature is common in Canada's literature. Canadian culture reflected in Canadian literatures shows self – deprecation. Some Canadian novels revolve around the theme of the search for self identity and need to justify one's existence. The most common hero of Canadian literature is an ordinary person who must overcome challenges from a large corporation, a bank, a rich tycoon, a government, a natural disaster and so on. Another variant theme involves a conflict between urban and rural culture, usually portraying the rural culture, usually portraying the rural characters as morally superior. Canadian literature has focused on nationalistic and regional themes.

Canadian Literature is sociologically oriented. Canadian literature is the literature of every nation, is influenced by its socio-political contexts. Canadian writers produced all variety of genres. Influence on Canadian writers is broad, both geographically and historically. Though the Canadian novel began to take off during 1950s with Mavis Gallant, Robertson Davis, Mordecai Richler Watson, it took an altogether new form with the emergence of women novelists like Margaret Atwood in 1960s along with Mice Munro, Norman Levine and Michael Ondaatje, Susanne Moodie, Sara Jeanette Duncan, Martha Ostenso, Ethel Wilson, Mazo de la Roche and Aele Wiseman are few other women writers, who have made significant contributions to the growth and development of Canadian Literature.

The first Canadian novelist of note was John Richardson who's *Wacousta* (1832) popularized the genre of the national historical novel. With *The Clock marker* (1836) J.C. Haliburton began his humorous series on Sam Slick, the Yankee peddler. Historical novelist's writings in 1900 included William Kirby, author of *The Golden Dog* (1877)

and Sir Gilbert Parker, author of *The Seats of the Mighty* (1896). The novels of Sara Jeannette Duncan, such as *A Social Departure* (1890) were noted for human and satire. Rev. C. W. Gordon produced *Black Rock* (1898), a series of novels on pioneer life in West Canada. Animal stories became popular in the works of Ernest Thompson and Margaret Marshal Saunders.

Fiction writers struggled with the same tensions as poets during the 19th century. The Canadian audience were small and publication of Canadian writing took place elsewhere namely in the United States or Britain-Canadian writers tried to satisfy foreign readers. Many fiction writers, like Susanna Moodie, Julia Catherine and Beckwith Hary, wrote conventional adventures that featured murder, love and suspense using foreign characters and setting. Since the late 19th century, Canadian fiction follows more or less the same development as other Commonwealth fiction. As Bruce King points out, it goes from local humor through an early internationalism, historical romances, stories of provincial and settler life, realism and a new rationalism in the early 1940's with Robertson Davies, Mordecan Richler, Mavis Gallant and Shelia Watson portraying the tensions of growing up in Canada's urban immigrant communities, dismissive of nationalism and national culture.

The Canadian novel takes an altogether new turn in the 1960's with the appearance of women novelists like Margaret Atwood and Margaret Laurence who tend to write more as women. Since 1900, Canadian novels have tended towards stricter realism, but have remained predominantly regional and many writers have been women. Some critics found the major developments in 19th century Canadian fiction in the romance, a form that typically glorifies the deeds and personalities of the past. In the late

19th and early 20th century, however the dominant pattern in Canadian fiction was the depiction and celebration of the wilderness – a depiction that denied the new society's increasingly urban face.

Atwood depicts that, 'Women cannot be ignored in Canadian Literature. You can't ignore them'. One of the recurring themes in Atwood's fiction is the search for identity and survival of the self in a society whose public and personal relationships are characterized by alienation, exploitation and domination. Atwood's first novel *The Edible Women* (1969), a funny and terrifying story, is a journey into the interior landscape of the protagonist, Marian Mac Alphin. The novel is about this woman who does not know what to do with life, and ever since her engagement she can't eat meat, then eggs, vegetables...everything. She feels being consumed eaten. This serves as the novel's metaphor, substantiating the title, that a woman is food and an object. The novel focuses on the woman's attempt for a human identity, a space in patriarchal society. Through Seymour surveys, a market research firm where Marian works, Atwood satirically attacks the consumer society of its time. By throwing light on Marian's victimization, Atwood highlights the idea of Americanization of Canada. One of the most prominent writers of the Canadian novelists is Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence, Rohinton Mistry, William Gibson etc.

Philip Michael Ondaatje was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka then called Ceylon on 12 September 1943. He is of Dutch and Sinhalese ancestry, making him a Burgher. His parents separated when he was an infant; he then lived with relatives until 1954 when he joined his mother in England. Before moving to England, he attended St. Thomas College, Mount Lavinia in Colombo. While in England, Ondaatje pursued secondary

education at Dulwich College; he then immigrated to Montreal, Quebec, for three years. In his final year he attended the University of Toronto where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1965. In 1967, he received a Master of Arts from Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. While he was working on his undergraduate degree at Bishop's University, Ondaatje's met his future mentor, the poet D.G Jones, who praised his poetic ability. After his formal schooling, Ondaatje began teaching English at the University of Western Ontario in London. In 1971, reluctant to get his PhD, he left his position at Western Ontario and went on to teach English Literature at Glendon College, York University. He is a Canadian novelist and a poet whose musical prose and poetry were created from a blend of myth, history, jazz, memoirs and other forms. He is the recipient of multiple literary awards such as the Governor General's Award, the Giller Prize, the Booker Prize, and the Prix Medicis étranger. Ondaatje is also an Officer of Canada, recognizing him as one of the Canada's most renowned living author. Ondaatje's literary career began with his poetry in 1967, publishing *The Dainty Monsters*, and then in 1970 the critically acclaimed *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*. His first novel, *Coming Through Slaughter* (1976), is a fictional portrait of jazz musician Buddy Bolden. *The English Patient* (1992), set in Italy at the end of the Second World War, was joint winner of the Booker Prize for Fiction and was made into an Academy Award-winning film in 1996. *Anil's Ghost* (2000), set in Sri Lanka, and tells the story of a young female anthropologist investigating war crimes for an international human rights group.

Ondaatje's notable work *The English Patient* (1992), takes up these themes and issues in a more subtle, indirect manner. Ondaatje has said that the novel articulates 'All people born in one place who live in another place have lost their source'. While

Ondaatje's early work was without doubt critically successful, it was *The English Patient*, a work that has also been translated into a successful film, that brought the author true international fame. Set in a villa in northern Florence, *The English Patient* observes the tumultuous events at the end of the Second World War from the margins. The haunting, harrowing yet compelling narrative spirals around one woman Hanna and three men: Caravaggio, the name of a key character in *In the Skin of the Lion*, Kip and *The English patient* of the title. The mysterious, nameless protagonist is confined to an upstairs bedroom after receiving horrified burns in a plane crash. Physically immobile, it is through his restless, drifting memory that the story of the victim's past emerges through a series of teasing fragments that takes us on an intimate journey between continental Europe and the African continent.

Much of Ondaatje's work has set out to explore and compare different kinds of truth: temporal and transcendent, fact and fable, objective record and subjective conviction. One of his early poems, *In Another Fashion*, announces a poetic manifesto in which "We must build new myths... to wind up the world" (Dainty 34). Myth's function, then, is to "wind up the world", to raise the quotidian to iconic status, which lifts it out of temporalities administered by a timidly conformist public or by an alliance of economic and political power, and into the realm of the universal and absolute. Equally, however, his more recent work has shown a politically motivated interest in the detailed historical record: the role of immigrant laborers in the building of the Bloor Street Viaduct in Toronto, *In the Skin of a Lion*.

The selected novel, *Anil's Ghost* shows the author's insightful portrayal of the Sri Lankan crisis. It is rich with tones and themes that are integrated beautifully throughout

the story. The important aspects of the novel, which are continually developed as the novel progress, are first introduced in the prefaces. By comparing this to the preface of a different novel by Ondaatje, *Running in the Family*, one can see the techniques the author utilizes to affect the reader. His ability to leave impressions is best exemplified by the comparison of the two pieces. The introduction of significant ideas in the prefaces of *Anil's Ghost* leads to stronger representation of the themes throughout the novel.

The author's note functions as the first introduction to the novel. It briefly explains the time period of Sri Lanka in which the novel takes place. By choosing to communicate the situation in a very unbiased and fact like manner, Ondaatje is able to present necessary information without bias. This is a considerably different style from the preface to *Running in the Family*, which features rich imagery such as 'the garden will lie in a blaze of heat, frantic with noise and butterflies'. By using such strong description, the reader is immediately drawn into the vivid picture of Sri Lanka that he paints. The large contrast between setting description illustrates that Ondaatje simply chooses to give the characters' stories higher importance, instead of using them as a vehicle to make a statement on Sri Lankan politics. For example, the injustice of Sailor's death and characters' many sacrifices to bring this to the light seem to accuse the Government of being in the wrong. But the emotional scene of Sarath's death is immediately countered by the insurgents' murder of president Katugala. In this way, the reader is discouraged from choosing a side. Instead, one is presented with the characters' personal struggles rather than a political one. The Sri Lankan crisis is more of a setting to illuminate Ondaatje's themes rather than the main focus of the novel.

Continuing on, Ondaatje uses the Miner's Folk Song to introduce the reader emotionally to the crisis in Sri Lanka. This serves the same purpose as the italicized introduction to *Running in the Family*, although not contributing to the plotline, Ondaatje, in both works, using these sections to introduce the Sri Lanka setting. Specifically in *Anil's Ghost*, it is used to depict a culture aspect. In the song, the worker is blessing the mechanisms that ensure his or her life's safety instead of the expected religious figure. Because of the desperation of his or her situation, he or she puts more faith in tangible objects. This idea is integrated throughout the novel in scenes such as the Buddha statue being destroyed by men looking for treasure. Ondaatje gives emphasis to the themes in text by writing that "these were fields where Buddhism and its values met the harsh political events of the twentieth century" (143). Few people have the luxury to believe in a religion promoting peace when they are experiencing the consequences a violent crisis every day. Because this idea exists from the beginning, Ondaatje is able to create a greater emotional impact throughout the novel and furthermore, leave a lasting impression on the reader with the final scene. This scene, in which Ananda recreates the destroyed Buddha statue, comes to represent not only the character's growth but also the development of the novel. A loss of faith in Buddha, represented by the Miner's Folk song to this last section is a thought provoking message of peace.

The same style is used by Ondaatje in the introduction to *Running in the Family*. Ondaatje is clearly skilled in depicting a vivid picture, which is evident in both works. The reader is immediately drawn in and enthralled by such writing. However, in *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje chooses not to use this to develop the plot. In fact, the two pages take place in Guatemala, an entirely different setting from Sri Lanka. This is to emphasize that

the important factor is not where this introduction takes place, but rather the emotional impact of it. The woman's grief for the two corpses is very human. Anil herself feels that, the grief of love in that shoulder she will not forget. Even without including the facts of the Guatemalan crisis, it is easy to grasp the awfulness of the situation. This theme is continued throughout the novel. Very rarely does he focus on numbers or data. The statistics and facts are clearly less significant than the toll the crisis takes on the general population. When the situation affects characters that the reader knows and can identify with, the atmosphere becomes much intimate.

By introducing this theme early on, Ondaatje creates a profound effect that holds for the rest of the novel. Ondaatje, as an author, can effectively use writing devices to have an influence on the reader. For instance, in both the italicized introduction in *Running in the Family* and in *Anil's Ghost*, there is a kind of disconnection from the character being described – like an outsider looking in. It is an effective technique that subtly influences the reader to experience a slight separation from the events taking place. In *Running in the Family*, this is done by the author describing himself in the third person. However, in *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje attains the same effect by describing the grieving woman from Anil's perspective, this role as an observer of others' suffering is continued throughout the novel. Despite the fact that she is originally from Sri Lanka, she is also a part of Western culture and is, in some ways, an outsider looking in. It is not until the end of the novel where, as Sarath notes, that it has been “fifteen years away and she is finally us” (17). It takes nearly the whole novel for Anil to go from the witness of others' grief as she is in the introduction, to considering herself a part of the Sri Lankan crisis. By creating the atmosphere of an outsider from the start, Anil's journey becomes

much clearer. The reader can better understand her development as a character and the impact of her words and actions towards the end of the novel.

CHAPTER TWO

A SUBSTANTIVE CRITICAL SCRUTINY ON ANIL'S GHOST

Anil's Ghost is a critically acclaimed fourth novel by Michael Ondaatje. It was published on 30th March, 2000. With his first novel since the internationally acclaimed *The English Patient*, Booker Prize winning author Michael Ondaatje gives his readers a work displaying all the richness of imagery and language and the piercing emotional truth that readers have come to know as the hallmarks of his writing. *Anil's Ghost* is broken into eight sections, set in Sri Lanka in the 1980s and early 1990s, when the counter-insurgency government, insurgent rebels in the south, and separatist guerrillas in the north had led the country into war. *Anil's Ghost* is a recipient of the Governor General's Literary Award for English-language fiction (2000), the Giller Prize (2000) and the Prix Medicis étranger (2000).

Unfolding the deeply evocative background of Sri Lanka's landscape and ancient civilization, *Anil's Ghost* is a literary spellbinder and Ondaatje's most powerful novel. *Anil's Ghost* transports the readers to Sri Lanka, a country steeped in centuries of tradition, now forced into the late twentieth century by the ravages of civil war. Into this maelstrom steps Anil Tissera, a forensic anthropologist, a brilliant, young woman born in Sri Lanka, educated in England and America sent by an International Human Rights Group, landed in Sri Lanka. Although she grew up in Sri Lanka, Anil has not returned to the country for fifteen years. She has been sent by the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva, as international specialist, to be partnered with a local archaeologist, Sarath

Diyasena. After reaching Colombo, Anil visits Lalitha, an elderly woman who lives in village, a mile beyond Rajagiriya. Anil declares that, as a child she was brought up by Lalitha.

Lalitha was the only person who taught her real things as a child. She then went to Kynsey Road Hospital and she met Dr. Perera, who worked with Anil's father, Nelson K. Tissera. Then she started her work by travelling with Sarath, on drive, he mentions about two brothers, Palipana and Narada and the latter one was murdered. Together both of them begin to investigate after reaching Bandarawela; they started excavating deep in the caves and found four skeletons in the ancient burial ground controlled by the government. Three of them are from the sixth century and one of them is a fragment of bone which is recent from twentieth-century. They nicknamed the fourth skeleton "Sailor", and Anil insists that they work to discover who killed "Sailor".

While Anil was working in Guatemala she flew into Miami to meet Cullis. He was her married boyfriend. A parallel can be drawn between Anil's marriage and that of her lover Cullis. Both are bound by their marriages in different ways. Cullis confesses that he had already pawned his heart. Cullis appears unable or unwilling to accept the love and comfort that Anil offered and stays with his wife. Anil on the other hand refuses to comply with the restrictions that her husband attempts to impose and so ends up her marriage. From a transnational perspective, both of these marriages can be seen as representative of ties to the characters' respective cultures.

Anil's husband provides a metaphor for the Eastern culture that she feels is attempting to prevent her becoming westernized. Anil leaves him very early in the

relationship, making sure that he cannot locate her, an action that adumbrates her temporary disavowal of her Sri Lankan cultural heritage. Hutcheon in his poem *Splitting* states that for the immigrant who has left behind a strong culture tradition, “the drive towards self-definition within a new culture may well involve separation from this ethnic past, at least temporarily”. This is certainly true of Anil, who after escaping her husband turned fully to the place she found herself in and immersing herself completely in her work. Later when questioned by Cullis about her background, she gives him no details.

Anil’s treatment of her marriage, “as something illicit that deeply embarrassed her” is parallel in her subjugation of her Eastern cultural identity in favour of the West. However, Ondaatje highlights acculturation as being an evolutionary process, rather than a product, in Anil’s subsequent return to Sri Lanka. It is notable that Anil’s husband remains nameless throughout the narrative and after the marriage is over Anil would never say his name out loud. By refusing to name her husband, Anil erases him from the cartography of her life in an action reminiscent of the imperial mapmakers. This contrasts strongly with Anil’s desire to name the skeleton of the Sri Lankan victim that she calls “Sailor”.

Sarath told Anil that his wife was dead but the rest house owner mentions that she is alive, and Sarath has visited her with his cousin. Anil was confused and ill. So in order to get refreshed she talked with her long distance friend Leaf and then she continues to examine the skeleton. She makes contact with Chithra, who works on insects, and asks for help with the skeleton. Sarath knows that he and Anil needed help so he cuts off the skull of the “Sailor”.

In “The Grove of Ascetics”, Sarath takes Anil to a forest monastery where his old mentor, an epigraphist named Palipana who is now in his seventies, lives. He introduced himself as a historian of inscriptions and Sarath’s teacher. After an academic scandal, he retired into the forest to live in the ruins of an ancient monastery. He is blind, and cared by his niece, Lakma, a twelve year old young girl. Lakma saw her parents killed and became frightened of everything; Palipana brought her to the forest and taught her, while she helped him as he lost his vision. Sarath and Anil went there with their skull. Palipana says that they should find a ritual painter. He describes the traditional ceremony of Netra Mangala, in which a specially appointed artist paints the eyes onto a holy figure such as a statue of Buddha; only then the statue can be considered holy. Palipana pointed them towards an artist Ananda Udugam; a ritual painter he has in mind, who has become a drunkard and now works in the mines. Then he carved an inscription for them at the edge of the water and died. Driving back to Colombo, they come across a truck driver, Gunasena, who has been terrorized, his hands nailed to the tarmac. Anil and Sarath decide to take him to the hospital.

In “A Brother”, the readers are introduced to Gamini, an efficient doctor, since her young age she has been living in Sarath’s shadow and works with the victims of violence in a base hospital. He reflects on the years that he has spent working in various hospitals, in the northeast provinces and now in Colombo. Linus Corea, a neurosurgeon, is kidnapped by the insurgents to work for them. Gamini does triage after bomb explosions. He is now working in accident services hospital in Colombo. Sarath brings Gunasena to Gamini, who is his brother; Gunasena’s injury is not very severe; but Gamini tells them that their work with the skeleton is dangerous. Anil remembers what

Sarath would say once she turned off her tape recorder. Sarath says about the family order in Sri Lanka, and tells the story of his sister-in-law. Anil remembers her studies in London, and her forensic work in the American Southwest, and relations with other pathologists. Meanwhile Sarath brings a soil sample which identifies “Sailor’s” first burial site. They planned to go there; he has kept this secret from the authorities, remembering worse times.

Sarath remembers rock drawings discovered in the times of worst violence. Later they find the formal ritual painter Ananda and his wife Sirissa Ananda, a teacher, who has seen her student beheaded. They brought Ananda along and they set up a shop in an old estate, where Sarath has visited as a child. Ananda begins to work on reconstructing the head, Anil studies the skeleton and Sarath goes back and forth to Colombo for supplies. Anil no longer has the fluency to talk with Ananda. He builds up the skull with clay, and breaks it up at the end of each day. Anil sees what Sailor’s skeleton suggests about his daily life, and begins to reconstruct his history. Ananda has finished the head; Sarath remembers the time when people were being beheaded. What Sarath told Anil and Gamini, is about the intuition which got Palipana kicked out of the profession. When they were talking Anil finds Ananda trying to stab himself; Sarath takes him to the hospital.

In “The Mouse”, the readers see Gamini being left by his wife Chrishanti. Sarath’s wife visited Gamini once in Emergency Services. She told Gamini that she and Sarath were offering him a place to stay as he had become too much of a vagabond. She was the only person who could say things caring to him. She knew he had always liked her. Gamini has proposed marriage to her twice during a party but she thought his proposal was a joke. He is taking drugs in order to keep working in emergency services;

it is also his job to identify the bodies of victims. Gamini remembers taking time off at the beach; guerrillas found him and insisted him to come and give treatment to their wounded. Gamini is nicknamed “the mouse” by his family. He thinks about the rivalry with his brother Sarath. Sarath is divorced, solitary and he was a perfect participant in the war. Gamini remembers his early days as a doctor at the base hospital in the Northeast. He passes on to Anil something important that he was told then.

In “Between Heartbeats”, Gamini recalls a complicated hearing procedure he once performed on a young boy. He fell in love with the nurse who helped him on that surgery, although she was married. Anil reflects on her close relationships with Leaf Niedecker, an American woman and forensic scientist. They both met in Arizona lab and later became close friends and constant companions. They used to watch old movies together, puzzling over where the different actors were stricken with bullets. Later Leaf left Arizona; much later, she asks Anil to visit her, and reveals that she has Alzheimer’s and is losing memory. Gamini tells Anil the story of the death of Sarath’s wife, who remains unnamed. He explained his love for Sarath’s wife and later her death. She has committed suicide and brought into the hospital as a suicide case. Though Gamini tried to save her, he could not.

In “The Life Wheel”, Sarath and Anil finally identify Sailor as Ruwan Kumura, a former toddy tapper turned mineworker. He was accused of being a rebel sympathizer and taken away. Anil ready to make the report about the political murder of Sailor, calls Dr. Perera, who is a family friend, for help. A car brought her to Colombo and the doctor meets her, the skeleton of “sailor” is misplaced. She now delivered her report to officials, the military and the police; she accuses them. Sarath sees the audience’s hostility,

challenges and patronizes her in order to diffuse it. He challenges her to do a forensic analysis of another skeleton and her papers and tape recorder are confiscated; she was told to leave. Sarath and Gunasena took two skeletons out of the building and he told her to go to the lab and work on the skeleton. Sarath has also given her the skeleton of the “Sailor” and tape recorder, along with a message: report and leave. When Sarath disappears, Anil goes to Colombo where she gives a report of their findings to a small auditorium full of government and police personnel. Although Sarath discredits her findings publicly, he arranges for her to finish her report and escape the country. Anil realizes Gamini and Sarath could speak easily only because she was there; she remembers how they talked about leaving as a feature of Western movies. The next day, Gamini is assessing the various bodies brought into the morgue, reviewing the photographs of victims; he recognizes and finds his brother, Sarath among them.

In “Distance”, a statue of the Buddha is dynamited by thieves. The artisan brought to Buduruvagala to attempt a reconstruction of the Buddha statue was a man named Ananda from the south. He was born in a village of stone cutters; he has been an eye painter. According to the Archaeological Department, which oversaw the project, he was a drinker but would not begin drinking until the afternoons. He had lost his wife some years earlier; she was also one among the thousands who had disappeared. Ananda was brought there to supervise the reconstruction of the statue. When he was working, another statue is built to replace the one destroyed. He wears Sarath’s cotton shirt under his costume, the one he had promised himself that he would wear for the morning ceremony, when he does the ritual of painting on the statue’s eyes.

Anil's Ghost refers to Anil's struggle to unify her past in Sri Lanka and America with her present life; it also refers to 'Sailor', the skeleton which Anil and Sarath work to identify, and which symbolizes, in a single entity, all the victims of war. It is the destruction of innocent lives that haunts Anil and drives her to identify the victims as well as the culprit who killed him. Another interpretation references the 'ghosts' of Sri Lankan atrocities that affects everyone meeting Anil during her time there.

Every character in the novel has deep psychological scars from the violence. Finally, the archaeologist Sarath may be Anil's ghost. His sacrifice at the end of the novel lives on as a memory in Anil and others; as such he lives on as a ghost. Thus *Anil's Ghost* follows a unique structure in the eight sections: "Sarath", "Grove of Ascetics", "A Brother", "Ananda", "The Mouse", "Between Heartbeats", "The Life Wheel", and "Distance". Each section corresponds to a narrative that deals primarily with a specific subject or character as denoted by the section's title. The section titled "The Mouse" focuses on Gamini. Additionally, most of the sections are introduced by an italicized personal anecdote about one of the characters related or unrelated to the section. Events from the past are usually unaddressed by the novel and are described within these anecdotes. Most of the anecdotes are told by a third person narrator from the perspective of one of the characters. This creates a sense of urgency for the individual experiences depicted in the anecdotes that lies in contrast to the rest of the novel. The sense of urgency expressed in the anecdotes mirrors the urgency of the individuals involved in the war who remain voiceless victims of the war crimes. They all have individual stories of their own related to the war that remain untold.

One of the important symbols of the novel is the skeleton named 'Sailor' that Anil and Sarath try to identify. 'Sailor's skeleton' is the only real evidence that Anil has, to implicate the government in the murder. 'Sailor' serves as a symbol for all of the nameless victims of the civil war. Like the countless victims, 'Sailor' has been burned beyond recognition and his identity has been lost. His remains serve as the only clue that Anil and Sarath have to bring justice to the victims. Anil and Sarath's fight is to identify that the 'Sailor' is a fight to bring a voice to stop the war.

Another symbol is Ananda's reconstructed head of 'Sailor'. Ananda sculpts 'Sailor's head' into a peaceful expression, symbolic of the peace that Ananda wishes for his wife and for the rest of his country. The juxtaposition between the tranquil looking head and its decapitated state is also symbolic of the chaos and death that surrounds Sri Lanka. At once Ananda wishes for peace, and yet no matter how much he tries, the peace is artificial. The reconstructed head at the same time can be seen as the naming of the victims. Finally, Anil and Sarath are able, with Ananda's help to bring a voice to the victim. Other things are repeatedly mentioned, but it is unclear that what is symbolized. Birds are referred to every possible opportunity. Prawns are also frequently referenced when describing bodies of water, the occupation of the people and when characters ordered meals in restaurants.

Religious statues in *Anil's Ghost* are representative of the Sri Lankan people's struggle during the war. Buddha's eye and "sight" were important. Similarly, so long as Sri Lankans and the westerners alike do not open their eyes and acknowledge the war and take a stand against the violations of human rights there will be no progress. There will be nothing. No name for victims, no identification of the enemy. The destruction will

continue and human existence will be hindered. Furthermore, there are continual allusions in the text to Michelangelo's *Pieta*, most notably in the woman at the beginning of the novel, who bends over the grave of her husband and her brother and Anil has the grief of her "shoulder" burned into the mind. This image is reflected later in the novel, when Gamini dresses his Sarath's wounds, even though he is already dead. This recurring Christian imagery contrasts strongly with the traditions inherent in crime writing of this nature, in which a sole detective is given the property of divine sense of justice. Rather, in this novel, the divinity is spread among all the victims of the civil war in Sri Lanka, such that, rather than focusing on the process of solving the crime, Ondaatje focuses on the suffering and grief of the victims of an almost universal criminality. Ondaatje's depiction of Anil's painstaking work, reading the bones of the dead is as haunting as it is true to life. He interviewed and worked with forensic anthropologists to understand and portray the details of their crafts. Ondaatje says, "To me, the book is dedicated to people like that and to doctors, who tend to be unsung heroes in these situations".

Ondaatje sees the connections between all things, hastens to add that the situation in *Anil's Ghost* is not endemic only to Sri Lanka. Ondaatje highlights that, other countries, other cultures have tried to obliterate the truth, obliterate their very own history but it's a very contemporary situation that goes on everywhere around the world. It is still difficult for the author to reconcile the Sri Lanka of his childhood with what it has become. Ondaatje mentioned that he has grown up in a country that was very different, the germs of racism were there then, he just wasn't aware of it. But he doesn't want the dark violence to be the only portrait of the country. It's not just the culture of death; it's an intricate, subtle and artistic culture. He wanted to celebrate it in a way the archaeology

was there for the purpose; he allowed that to represent the country, not just generals and politicians. Though it explores the darkness, *Anil's Ghost* shimmers with beauty and hope and ends with a human touch. Ondaatje in one of his interview said that he had no idea how he was going to end that book; he laughed and said that he was terrified. But he wrote until he reached the truth.

CHAPTER THREE

EFFECTS OF POST COLONIALISM IN ONDAATJE'S ANIL'S GHOST

Post colonialism deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies. As originally used by historians after the Second World War in terms such as post colonial state, 'post- colonial' had a clearly chronological meaning, designating the post independence period. However, from the late 1970s the term has been used by literary critics to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization. By definition, post colonialism is a period of time after colonialism, and post colonial literature is characterized by its opposition to the colonial. Despite a consensus on general themes of post colonialism, there is an ongoing debate regarding the meaning of post colonialism. Many critics propose that ^{the} term should include the literatures of Canada, the United States and Australia.

Michael Ondaatje picks up fragments of history and holds them together binding them with the glue of his intimate love for mythology and his angst at his loss of cultural identity. The history that pervades his works is written with a fresh imagination of an author infused with rich contextual imagery and his collection of cultural history and thus, does not reflect the staleness of a historian's version. His novels are unique. He makes use of photographs, diary clippings, lyrical poetry, haiku, songs, parts of plays and interviews. Each of his work, whether prose or poetry, displays his urge to experiment not just with the themes but also with the form and language.

Ondaatje dwells on the human memory that holds on to the private history which parallels the progression of the nation's history. He challenges the tendency of human mind to rely on the reported version of history by interspersing his works with examples of individual history that presents the struggles and agonies of the common man caught in the point of the history of a troubled nation.

Ondaatje's novel *Anil's Ghost* dwells on the area of war. Michael Ondaatje portrays the incidents that took place in Sri Lanka during the Civil war that ensued in the country in late twentieth century. Sometimes, it is war's sake and sometimes it depicts the harrowing experiences of people caught in a war. Ondaatje points out that war inflicts terror and snatches happiness and peace, from every individual caught in it, the little joys that make life worth living. Moreover, Ondaatje takes his readers through love and romance during a war and to appreciate the lingering memories that live on in human minds long after it all comes to an end.

Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, is a historical novel. It purports to generate fictitious characters in a genuine situation. The author gives a clear note on the glimpse of the war at the beginning of the novel. From the mid 1980s to the early 1990s, Sri Lanka was in a crisis that involved three essential groups: the government, the anti-government insurgents in the south and the separatist guerrillas in the north. Both the insurgents and the separatists had declared war on the government. Eventually, in response, legal and illegal government squads were known to have been sent out to hunt down the separatists and the insurgents.

Ondaatje has described the intense involvement of the common man in the forensic team in quest for the truth. The relatives of the victims would serve tea to the forensic team and at other times, they would hold up a banana leaf to provide them shade. This involvement of the common people proves that both of them have common goals and desires. The author also portrays the anxieties of the relatives of the victims in the war. The common men who have lost their near and dear ones, who play a major role in their life, have the only desire to know whether their missing relative is alive or not.

The government has involvement in the unlawful killings and hence the common man have to keep a vigil for the lost corpses and whenever skeletons are unearthed, the wait to know whether their search is over. By knowing the truth, they could attain peace and their search would be over at last. The people are helpless and long to know the truth. So they work more intensely along with forensic team. Ondaatje reveal 'the grief of love', the pain and anguish of these people patiently, helplessly and inconspicuously hunting for the truth everywhere when he says:

There was always the fear, double- edged, that it was their son in the pit, or that it was not their son, which meant there would be further searching. If it became clear that the body was stranger, then after weeks of waiting, the family would rise and leave. They would travel to other excavations in the western highlands. The possibility of their lost son was everywhere (7).

Ondaatje invokes the Archaic Greek history of wartimes by referring to a work by the poet, Archilochus, the father of lyrical poetry who described love, sex, drinking, his

military life, etc in his poetry. Here, Ondaatje draws attention to the moral ethnics of war since olden times which require that one faces one's enemy head on rather than hiding behind masks of anonymity. Ondaatje's use of Archilochus' poetic words invariably serves to stir memories of Archilochus' personal history.

Archilochus uses sharp satire and ferocious attack in a beast fable of the fox and the eagle, to portray the relationship between Lycambes, the eagle who goes back on his promise of marrying his daughter to Archilochus and himself, the fox and not only accuses Lycambes of falsehood but also insults about Lycambes' daughters during the feasts of Demeter and thereby becomes directly involved in causing Lycambes and his daughters to commit suicide by hanging themselves.

Another fragment of Archilochus' personal history hints of justification of his act by God for Archilochus' killer is banned from the temple of Apollo at elphi through a divine oracle charged with the guilt of having killed the servant of the Muses. Thus, what Ondaatje attempts to do here is to collate these fragments of Archilochus' personal history with his poetic line translated by Anil to make the point that history of morality in wartimes irrespective of the heartlessness involved mandates knowing one's enemy.

By using Archilochus' work, who superimposes not only the images of Archilochus' personal history but also those in a war situation in Ancient Greece over those in the Sri Lankan scenario. In the story the innocent citizens are secretly killed. The killing of these people left no clue of finding out the enemy since they were done in the form of abductions. So the people were left in a helpless situation of not knowing, which Ondaatje criticizes as it serves to confuse the civilians caught in the politics within the

nation. The skeletons were dug out of a cocoa pit in Matale. At University Anil had translated lines from Archilochus, “In the hospitality of war we left them their dead to remember us by, but here there was no such gesture to the families of the dead, not the information of who the enemy was” (11).

This lament is voiced by Ondaatje’s protagonist Anil when she surveys the ground reality of civil war with her own eyes. Anil, a native of Sri Lanka, leaves the country at the age of eighteen, is away for fifteen years for persuasion of her education in U.S and England and now possesses a British passport. She, inadvertently, gets involved in the making of history of the nation when she is sent to Sri Lanka for a period of seven week as the forensic anthropologist. She is accompanied by Mr. Sarath Diyasena, the Sri Lankan government archeologist. Their main goal was to investigate about the truth of the murders in the island. Anil soon perceives the pain of the civilization and begins to connect with the country more strongly than ever before in spite of her handicap of interpreting the country “with a long distance gaze” (11).

The novel provides the archaeological historiography of parts of the island city in the form of diary entries to Anil. This diary entry also draws attention to the impermanence of the beauty of art works. The transient nature of the Boddhisattvas, that were discovered by the Japanese archaeologists in 1918 were destroyed by the people and those wonders of art were taken out of the walls of caves in Sri Lanka and relocated in museums in the West. A dairy entry provides a graphic description of such a human intervention: Cave 14 was once the most beautiful site in a series of Buddhist cave temples in Shanxi province.

When you entered, it looked as if huge blocks of salt had been carted away. The panorama of Boddhisattvas – their twenty-four rebirths were cut out of the walls with axes and saws, the edges red, suggesting the wound's incision (AG 12)

In this novel *Anil's Ghost*, the readers find Palipana instructing his archaeological students regarding the importance of the mind in constructing the past rather than relying on visible archaeological evidences alone. This is especially true in the context of Sri Lanka because art was conquered based on particular religion or strata of society that had earned the displeasure of the ruling government. This superiority of the mind or ascendancy of the idea which is capable of transcending the truth is explained by Palipana:

He said this in his first class to his archaeological students. He had been talking about books and art; about the 'ascendancy of the idea' being often the only survivor...This was the place of a complete crime. Heads separated from bodies. Hands broken off. None of the bodies remained all the statuary had been removed in the few years following its discovery by the Japanese archaeologists...Three torsos in a museum in California. A head lost in a river south of the Sind desert, adjacent to the pilgrim routes (AG 12).

Ondaatje has also implied scientific methodology in this novel to unravel the truth. Anil uses her forensic expertise on a couple of corpses when she meets forensic students in a

hospital. Having translated the time of killing in to personal time, she realizes the freshness of the corpses which were the victims of political circumstances and on the basis of the injuries seen in the bodies start deducing the methodology used to kill them; the next corpse brought in had flail fractures on the rib cage. It meant he had fallen from a great height, at least five hundred feet before hitting the water belly down. The air knocked out of the body. It meant a helicopter (14).

These political murders are outrageous. They do not fail to attract international attention. Though complaints are given for the justice the president ignores them because the government has great involvement in it. Anil reaches her birth place after long struggles to investigate the truth. Anil is thus afforded an understanding of the circumstances in the country of her birth through the lenses offered by the Government. However, she is able to gauge the scale of the situation soon when her local partner Sarath Diasena puts things in perspective.

Sarath explains that the executions are a mixed assault by the insurgents, government and by the guerrilla separatists. Neither can blame be affixed for death nor can be the victims identified. The country has thus traversed a long way from its days steeped in ancient glory. The Oronsay, a ship is used as metaphor for the journey of Sri Lankans from the colonial era unto the present times. In the colonial past, the liner has luxury furnishing for the tourist class. By 1970, the rooms are amended to enable the liner to suit local trips and to enable it to carry cargo, when necessary and later the sturdy ship is berthed permanently and is utilized merely as space. This gradual loss in function of The Oronsay with its value being under estimated and its potential being underutilized is analogous to the glorious past of the Nation being dislodged as the Nation slowly gets

embroiled in the internal war trappings. Moreover, the civil strife in the present sees the country in a stagnant position staring at a miserable future as it helps to violence against its own citizens in a lost cause of polarization of the viewpoints of the one and all.

Anil is not happy with the present situation. She finds herself reminiscing about her past happy associations with her family and friends. The present holds apprehensions about association with anybody as one is no longer sure about who is friend and who is foe. Further, although her job requires her to unbury bodies, dead to others, to make it speak out suppressed facts, very often the dead just offer glimpse of hope and it requires a human conscience, seeped in vitality, to endeavor on to know the whole truth.

When in course of Anil's search, she finds a bone of recent origin at the Bandarawela region, all her senses are aroused for she is well acquainted with the archaeological history of the region and immediately realize that this region was declared as government protected zone. So, on the discovery of prehistoric remains, her senses alert her about the significance. She suspects it to be the key of closest truth and with an aspiration to reach this truth she urges Sarath to allow her to visit the place. Ondaatje, thus, uses his protagonist Anil's knowledge of the forensic science to unearth the disclaimed history of the nation. All this materials come from the monks' burial hidden, in the government archaeological preserve. Nobody else gets in. 'But this bone – it does not come from that time'. He had stopped what he was doing and was watching her. 'It's a government protected zone. The skeletons were interred in natural hollows near the Bandarawela caves. Skeletons and loose bones, 'Can't we go there? I suppose so. Let me try and get a permit'. (20-21)

Truth is not always spoken. Fear often subdues the truth. Ondaatje calls this fear of revealing the truth in Sri Lanka as “a national disease” (53). Common people require extraordinary courage to reveal the truth. Sarath and Anil are expected to work in favour of the government, but their attempt to complicate it shows a dedication to the job assigned to them and an attempt to change the course of the Nation’s history.

Ondaatje throws light on the interplay of language and its role in the interpersonal relations. Passive language is easily forgotten. Minority language becomes a matter of shame when the language of majority is favoured by the nation. In a civil war torn country, Anil’s attempts at rebuilding ties with the past is unexpectedly hampered by a lost language between her and Lalitha, who took care of her and whom Anil remembered vividly as “the only person who taught her real things as a child” (24). She relies on the language of silence to communicate with her as she sits down next to her quietly holding her hands. Lalitha uses a photograph and sign language to introduce her granddaughter to her.

While Lalitha and her granddaughter conversed in Tamil, Anil could grasp the essence of their conversation on the basis of her limited vocabulary and their manner of speaking. It is only memories of the past that Anil shares with Lalitha. By asking for a photograph with Anil, Lalitha creates personal record of the emotional moment of their reunion. Ondaatje reveals how the growth of the nation was underdeveloped at a point of fifty years in the past. He makes use of the agencies in the National Atlas which include old portraits, a geological map and pages with other records of the Nation like bird life, monsoons, isobars and altitudes but provides no clue about the present.

Ondaatje points out through a deliberate damage of historical records which documents anything other than the laurels of the nation and by holding back the phase which presents the nation in a poor light. And the deliberate gaps in history of the nation are created. He points out various strategies, like skipping of names and events, used by the government to pull the veil over this part of history:

There are no city names, Only the unknown and unvisited town of Maha Illupalama is sometimes noted, where the Department of Meteorology once, in the 1930s, in what now seems a medieval time, compiled and recorded winds and rainfall and barometric pressure. There are no river names. No depiction of human life.” (40).

Ondaatje also puts into record other attempts of muting of history. Once the Human Rights group found more details than that the government wanted to reveal, so their facts are burned overnight by the police. “Their collection of data had disappeared overnight, their paperwork burned, As if a city from the past had been reburied” (29). People attempting to bring out facts are themselves taken to task. Ondaatje comments that this ‘Hundred Years’ War’ (43) is being urged on by smugglers dealing in guns and drugs while themselves residing in safe locations in other countries.

The war is fought with the aim of exploiting. Soldiers burn villages and claim that their act is according to law while villagers believe that law means the right of the army to kill them. There seems to be a state of willful political amnesia masterminding the heinous acts in the nation. Fear is a powerful emotion running through the soul of the

nation; history makes statement about the nation being undone by the cowardice of the citizens. Ondaatje redeems the citizens of this stigma by putting on record the raw pain of the relatives of the victim, their helplessness at their inability to get justice for their dead, their immense control in spite of their angst and feelings of mutiny. He thus makes a case for the citizens at the receiving end of violence. He says, "In a fearful nation, public sorrow was stamped down by the climate of uncertainty. If a father protested a son's death, it was feared another family member would be killed. If people you knew disappeared, there was a chance they might stay alive if you did not cause trouble. This was the scarring psychosis in the country... All that was left of law was a belief in an eventual revenge towards those who had power". (56)

The horror of the cold blooded civil war is also reproduced by Ondaatje in this novel. The planned murder reflects that wars were fought for the sake of war. Humanity fades and people are killed mercilessly because they belong to the other side. It articulates a situation in which committing political murder is more of a way of life in civil war torn Sri Lanka. Ondaatje describes a planned murder of a government official by an insurgent who commits the act of taking advantage of the darkness and noise as the train passed through a tunnel and comments about the murderer. It indicates an alternative source of the history of the war that captures lingering post-traumatic stress disorder of the civilians caught in the cusp of war.

Colombo, the city, is for Anil a memory complex that tingles each of her senses. She recalls the sight of prawn sellers holding their wares to passing traffic, the smell of hemp from ropes lit outside cigarette stalls, the sound of her father singing, the exhilarating feeling of joy in expending her energy practicing swimming at dawn. In spite

of all these childhood memories of traditional Sri Lanka, she adopts Western modes of thinking in course of her education there. She enjoyed the greatest gift to her of the ability to run her life in her own terms, without interference. While Anil reiterates the virtue of having one's own space in the West. Thus we could find Chithra as dedicated as Anil.

A micro history of the civil war is created through the personal history of Dr. Linus Corea who was kidnapped by the insurgents in 1987 and who after that kept his emotions at bay and devoted himself to trying to save as many lives as possible. Ondaatje describes how after the initial use of the force on the doctor, the insurgents respected his needs and brought in medical essentials that he sought, a nurse and later even his family. This unlikely friendliness between opponents during times of chaos of war remains unrecorded in history and by recording this in the novel. Ondaatje fills in the gaps in recorded history. Ondaatje also makes use of the micro narratives of personal history of people to present multiple versions of the impact of a civil war. He recounts the psychological devastation of Lakma, a twelve year old relative of Palipana, who witnessed the killing of her parents. Although she is taken in by the nuns, the incident permanently scars her and arrests her development:

“The shock of the murder of the girl's parents, however, had touched everything within her, driving both her verbal and her motor ability into infancy. This was combined with an adult sullenness of spirit. She wanted nothing more to invade her”
(AG 103).

If Lakma's experience provides insight into the psychological trauma of war, Gunasena who is found unconsciously by Sarath and Anil, crucified to the pitch with bridge nail hammered into both his palms, through the experience, drives home the ruthless face of such wars. Street bombs kill people; sometimes damage them but essentially shocking everyone. The victims have emotional shock to deal with in addition to deafness or semi- deafness. The relatives of patients face a great ordeal as "roads to larger medical centers were often closed because of mines, and helicopters were unable to travel in darkness" (126).

Palipana, the archaeologist provides direction in locating the right person to recreate Sailor's skull. Ondaatje using Anil's deduction of Sailor's profession and Ananda's recreation of Sailor's skull, Anil and Sarath identify Sailor as Riwana Kumara, a toddy tapper in his early days and a mine worker in his days after breaking his leg. This enables them to find out the specific date of his abduction. In order to plan their future course of action, Sarath goes to Colombo. Dr. Perera who believes to be Sarath's father does not ensure the safety of her possessions and she loses her evidence in the form of Sailor's skeleton.

Ondaatje thus juxtaposes these attempts of the common man with the politics of the nation. Thus Ondaatje narrates tales of individuals caught in the cusp of war in *Anil's Ghost*. The anti-war stance is clear in the novel. By writing poignant tales related to historical events like civil war in Sri Lanka, he seems to give a plaintive call for peace. He combines personal histories and mobilizes agents like personal memories, memoirs, diary writings, travelogues and other historical archives to throw up alternate histories challenging the notion of a single version of history written from the dominant position.

Anil's Ghost uses Anil to highlight the angst of the diasporic natives who wish to alleviate the pain of the parent nation.

Ondaatje histories fiction and fictionalizes history and thereby transforms his novels in to documents of truth, not only throwing light on aspects of history that are kept under wraps by those in power but also enabling the readers to contextualize history and to appreciate the chronology of events that have shaped a Nation's history. The multi-layered quests that he embarks on have ramifications on readers all across the world as he seduces them not only to traverse the fictional paths that he creates but also to understand the mingled histories of people caught in war ravaged countries.

CHAPTER IV

ENIGMA OF IDENTITY

Identity crisis has penetrated the larger issues of culture, race, gender and identity. Most themes that postcolonial theory and literature deal with are race, gender ethnicity, identity and culture. Identity crisis is the condition of being uncertain of one's feelings about oneself, especially with regards to the character, goals and origins, occurring especially in adolescence as a result of growing up under disruptive, fast changing conditions. This novel *Anil's Ghost* exposes and expresses the conditions of identity crisis that emerged in postcolonial period.

Ondaatje manages different issues identified with national and global issues in his books. The various issues which Ondaatje examine in his books eventually identifies with his vision of a worldwide town. Whatever issues people face, close to their home or national level are the after effects of the idea of division and man's force, name and acclaim. Ondaatje definitely watches and encounters every one of these issues and in this way underpins the idea of globalization as a successful solution for every one of them.

Ondaatje doesn't simply discuss his vision of a worldwide town. Much subsequent to being a Diaspora and vagrant himself he never limits his books towards the suffering of his place as a transient. Every one of his books is a proof to this reality. Being a genuine admirer of humankind he clarifies the enduring of every single person. For Ondaatje, names and personalities are not fixed substances, however social and ideological developments. By choosing another name for herself, Anil takes on another

character; she turns into an alien to her past self. The readers are not told about the name which she was known by, for the initial twelve years of her life. The truth is that before turning out to be Anil, she remains undistinguished and she was similar to the anonymous skeleton 'Sailor'.

In obtaining her name Anil cracks the limits among herself and others. It is noteworthy that Anil doesn't pick a name aimlessly; rather she wants to have a relationship with one that has a place both with her sibling and to the grand dad she has never known. Anil's motion isn't one in particular that declares her autonomy; however it is additionally a freeing and self-making activity that certifies her relationship with her parentage and acclimatizes her roots into her new person. Besides, it shows a syncretism and hybridism that is associated with the development of personality and is uncovered through transnational assessment of this investigation of naming.

The mystifying nature of the protagonist's identity soon materializes. Anil was not in fact her original name, because she was convinced that she had two "inappropriate" (67) names and in her early teens she had conducted an uncompromising battle in her family to have the names changed. The story goes that instead she preferred her brother's second name, and eventually managed to erode everybody's capacity to resist her from achieving her goal. The terms of the bargain between the siblings are clear. "She gave one hundred saved rupees, a pen set he had been eyeing at for some time, a tin of fifty Gold Leaf cigarettes she had found, and a sexual kindness he had demanded in the last hours of the impasse" (68). It is obvious from this citation that this investigation of personality through the obtaining of a name, has other complex components of offense; for instance, there indicate inbreeding and the difficult of developments of sex.

As acting as a proof of the protagonist's stubbornness, it is clearly indicative of the ways in which Anil circumscribes the boundaries of her own personal identity. It appears to be an act of intentional appropriation; a resolution that crosses the established limits of gender divisions and a challenge to an ethical transgression. When she ponders her epochal decision, Anil meditates that "Everything about the name pleased her, its slim, stripped-down quality, its feminine air, even though it was considered male name. Twenty years later she felt the same about it" (68).

Harting correctly stresses that Anil's choice reveals "a certain androgynous quality of her character" (52), but at the same time her meaningful assessment also marks the emancipatory terrain of conquest that she determines to occupy. In her maturity and especially after her divorce, Anil fully experiences the possibilities of bisexuality and becoming the lover of a US married man but also the sweetheart of an American female forensic scientist, always showing a strong, at times even violent, emotional feedback and a peculiar purpose in the shaping of her lover affairs. While it is true that she is "chronically unlucky in love" (Davis 2009:17), it is equally true that this tract seems to be the general norm of Ondaatje's protagonists, rather than a weak point in her character.

Anil's identity seems to be clearly deconstructing assumed forms of fixity and permanence in favour of dynamic and transitory models of identity formation. Deprived of a gender association, she is also the typical example of a diasporic subject establishing one's individuality beyond the conventional bonds with a nation. Born in Sri Lanka, married in England, living in US but identified as "the woman from Geneva" (71) because of her involvement with an unspecified Center for Human Rights in Switzerland, Anil's identity seems to be an irresolvable riddle in the plot for all those straining to

classify her according to a national identity. Throughout the pages of the novel, Anil's sense of displacement surfaces unmistakably and the following passage is crucial in revealing how the indicator of identity is assessed: "In her years abroad, during her European and North American education, Anil had courted foreignness, was at ease wheather on the Bakerloo line or the highways around Santa Fe. She felt completed abroad" (54). Her transnational and hybrid status soon becomes evident in the story, bringing as its immediate consequence an equally evident lack of rootedness. When asked about her background by her American lover Cullis, for instance, she becomes curiously evasive and answers: "I live here" she said "In the West" (36).

An analysis of the way in which home and houses operate in the story already provides enough evidence of the racial process of rootlessness at work. With the focus on the protagonist, the narrator stresses that "In the five or six houses of her adult life, her rule and habit was always to live below her means. She had never bought a house and kept her rented apartment sparse" (67), demonstrating the clear intention to avoid any risk of setting permanently in a place. Nor should one hasten to conclude that she is unhappy about the places she has chosen to live in. Her implicit choice, in fact, seems to drive her towards an itinerant model of life, establishing as few relationships as possible either with the place or with the people she happens to meet. All her dwellings in the plot seem to confirm that a pattern favouring precariousness and transitoriness prevails, the hotel in Bandarawela and the *walawwa* in Ekneligoda are surely part of this design. A brief discussion apart is necessary about the quarters on board the *Oransay*, an ex-liner berthed in Colombo harbor, used by Anil and Sarath as their laboratory, a doubt remains that the grand ship has a twin purpose for Anil in the plot, being used as lodging and a workspace.

Anil is the only nomad in the plot, because she seems to be living among her peers, rather than like one on her own. Palipana, to begin with, seems to be the quintessential exile in Ondaatje's fiction, characterised by a blend of isolation, asceticism and remoteness. Physically retired from civilization and the material world, he now lives in a forest monastery "in the remnants of a 'leaf hall', with little that was permanent around him" (84). Moreover, Gamini, a doctor often busy in the first aid emergency ward, shares with the others the losses and the wants of the homeless. Broken-hearted and drained by the violence of the conflict, he wanders aimlessly when he returns home after some time only to discover, and meanwhile his place has been occupied. In a state of depression, he finds himself unable to react to a challenging situation and remains passive, the narrating voice tells the readers that "Two months after his wife left him, Gamini collapsed from exhaustion, and the administration ordered a leave. He had nowhere to go, his home abandoned" (215)

Anil was viewed as a male name and mirrors a manly side to her character that is uncovered further in her decision of a profession as a criminological researcher, one that is additionally observed as prevalently manly. Anne McClintock proposes Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry says that, "In Bhabha's schema mimicry is a flawed identity imposed on colonized people who are obliged to mirror back an image of the colonials but in imperfect form; almost the same but not white" (62).

Ondaatje obscures the limits of sexual orientation in his development of the character of Anil Tissera; by naming herself, she guarantees the domain of her personality, her own condition of self-hood in what can be interpreted as a neo-provincial, additionally a gendered activity.

Gayle Rubin contends that as indicated and crafted by Levi Strauss, the forbiddance of inbreeding guarantees that sisters, little girls and moms must be given in marriage, and in this manner makes a wide system of relations, a gathering of individuals who are associated together by a family relationship structure also thus, the interbreeding untouchable and the after effects of its application establish the starting point of culture, and is an essential of culture. In this way she reasons that so as to succeed, the women's activist program must incorporate an undertaking considerably more difficult than the elimination of men; it must endeavor to dispose of culture and substitute some totally new marvels on the essence of the earth.

As Rubin yields herself, it is neither plausible nor doable that there will be a destruction of culture; nonetheless, Ondaatje shows the chance of it not evacuating at any rate rising above or breaking the divisions and limits between societies. He does this by building up the thought of way of life as a procedure that includes ceaseless social syncretism and hybridity, and the antiquated thought of a fixed social personality with the rising idea of one that is genuinely transnational. The social anthropologist, David Schneider, in his book "American Kinship," states that in American culture, any sexual demonstration outside of the spouse wife relationship is characterized as ethically, and sometimes, lawfully, wrong; he expresses that between bold family members such a demonstration is interbreeding and disallowed. By making a perverted demonstration essential for the acquisition of Anil's name, Ondaatje shows that the beginning of her transnationalism is the breaking of an untouchable; to become transnational, includes the offense of the limits that separate among the insider and pariah, national and universal.

Ramon Gutierrez recommends that to have American nationality, one should either be naturally introduced to the country or enters it through a lawful procedure and become residents through a procedure called 'naturalisation'; he affirms that nature and law therefore make residents. Ondaatje shows a transnational personality of Anil Tissera, made through either nature or law yet appears outside of the acknowledged request that is required for having a place with a solitary nationality. So as to increase transnational citizenship Anil moves past the customary method of national recognizable proof. Anil's name, her interest to characterize herself inside and through that name she mirrors this beautiful portrayal from a transnational idea of syncretism, her name holds her character.

Ondaatje engages Anil through a transnational character that included both Western request and Eastern issue; her Western proclivity towards naming and apportionment and Eastern energy and lack of caution leave her allowed to loot Cullis both genuinely and inwardly. Cullis' absence of opportunity is inferred in the caution and stress that he wears as defensive garments which Anil endeavors to 'take off' and unfasten. The vehicle wherein he sits and his marriage, remain as allegories for the imperatives forced on Cullis by a fixed social personality, limits that Anil's transnationalism has no trouble in violating. In the self development of her personality, Anil is complicit, at that point, in permitting her to be 'colonized' by Western culture. In any case, in investigating the impact of cultural assimilation on singular personality, Ondaatje uncovered a portion of the divisions among Eastern and Western societies in the contentions that Anil encounters.

Anil's treatment of her marriage, as something illegal that profoundly humiliated her is resembled in her enslavement of her Eastern social personality for the West. It is

conceivable to reason that Ondaatje offers a tri-phasic model of the procedure of cultural assimilation, as analyzed through the development of Anil Tissera's own and social character. Anil at first, wards upon the social and individual character given to her by her folks, she moves into an autonomous stage motioned by her carving for another name and her selection of an alternative culture. With *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje provides an explanation to Tsuda's contention that "diasporic homecomings are often quite ambivalent, if not negative, experiences" (177), stretching the boundaries of ambivalence up to a very limit. Thus *Anil's Ghost* offers an outstanding behavioral example of the maelstrom of conflicting forces at drive in a postcolonial, transnational, diasporic, bisexual subject frantically trying to draw the contours of Anil's own identity.

CHAPTER V

SUMMATION

Diaspora is a scattering of the wind, the fruits of which are a new creation and flight to survive. Every diasporic movement holds a historical significance, as it carries within itself the kernel of the nation's history. Diaspora is a journey towards self-realization, self-recognition, self-knowledge and self-definition. There is an element of creativity present in the diasporic writing and this creating stands as a compensation for the many losses suffered. The chief characteristics features of the diasporic writings are the quest for identity, uprooting insider and outsider syndrome, nostalgia and nagging sense of guilt.

Michael Ondaatje works deals with the concept of post modernism. It employs the strategies of people condition in the society of war and migration. Moreover, the equally offered totalizing forms of social theories have lost its authenticity to the massive changes that have enveloped the world. The interdisciplinary approach that combined the effect of cultural factors on the psychological and historical framework, they maintain a peaceful nature to upload a unanimous society without any difference to an attaining amiable society.

Nature is sometimes portrayed as an enemy and sometimes like a divine force. It overcomes the challenges from a larger corporation, a bank, a rich tycoon, a government, a natural disaster and so on. Another variant theme involves a conflict between urban and rural culture, usually portraying the rural characters as morally superior. Canadian literature has focused on nationalistic and religious themes. Canada's ethnic and cultural

diversity are reflected, with many of its most prominent writers focusing on ethnic life. Ondaatje adverts violence in the world as a predominant threat for mankind in the novel "*Anil's Ghost*". The disputes that arose during the period of colonization have led to incidents of violence throughout the world. It focuses on the transformation and creates an awareness of the arrival of a new world with the large scale social uprising against the icons of authority. He attempts to articulate the complexity of colonial inheritance and the need to transcend beyond the boundaries of the official records in the novel, "*Anil's Ghost*".

Anil's version of the atrocities in Sri Lanka foregrounds the exact state of the country as opposed to the official history. That claims no knowledge of the violence in the country. She encrypts the suppressed accounts of the victims of violence with the belief that she can alleviate their trauma; her attempt to disclose the secret behind murder of Sailor to bring out the muffled voices of millions of people. Ondaatje's novel liberates history from the influence of the dominant totalitarian and colonial ideologies. He asserts that the subaltern people should unite and assert claims of their own. The voiceless state of the marginalized people will only lead to the evanescence of their presence from history. He calls for reformation in the attitude of the historians so as to emancipate people from their hapless state. He urges the historians to give an accurate account of the facts and incidents without dissimulating the information for personal favour. He reiterates that the historians should state the events of the world as it happens instead of writing it as how it should happen. He conceives of a society where two hundred people of all cultures would live socially without being subjugated by the imperialists and rulers of the country.

The economic development and eradication of poverty should also be at the forefront of the development agendas in all countries. The racial inequalities and the social differences are the major causes of poverty. The globalisation of the world has brought in massive global inequalities. The power structures and institutions in the global system generate discrepancies in wealth and income. This is evident when one half of the people battle against hunger, poverty, disease, security in the work place, the elite class of people live lavishly enjoying themselves in pubs and hotels. The appalling discrepancies between the classes of people create impediments in the progress of any civilization. The ruling authorities should hike the wages for the working class irrespective of racial differences and ensure safe working conditions so as to enhance the economic condition of the workers.

Michael Ondaatje is a versatile genius who artistically explores a variety of themes through different genres. A gifted poet, a talented novelist, an anthologist and a filmmaker; he is hailed as one of the most celebrated and multitalented diasporic writers of Canada since the 1960s. He is the achiever of many awards as well as author of great excellence and rare literary distinction. Ondaatje's writing reveal his multicultural perspective. His writings contain vivid but bitty details; powerful imageries, astounding juxtapositions and an obsession with intense experience. *Anil's Ghost* is embedded in the continuous flow of artistic creativity that is so typical of Michael Ondaatje: the novel is marked by the same poetic strength; emotional intensity and fragmentation with which his major novelistic works are featured. Although many critics have remarked that the novel manifests remarkable changes from Ondaatje's previous works, it displays an outstanding fusion of fact and fiction.

Ondaatje is a transnational writer who has incorporated the elements of east and west in his novels. He integrates oriental characters in western background to signify the importance of living in a borderless world. He is concerned over the conditions of people all over the world and propagates an unthreatening social scenario with no borders and conflicts. He has paid scrupulous attention while composing the novels by collecting information, facts and interviews to give a factual appeal to his fictional works. He is a great historian and a psychologist who has delved deep into the human psyche and world history to give his novels a universal significance. Ondaatje has been honoured by the Sri Lankan government several times. On 11 July 1988, Ondaatje was made an Officer of the 'Order of Canada' which was later upgraded to grade of companion in 2016, the highest level of the order. In 2005, he was honoured with 'Sri Lanka Ratna' by the former Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga. 'Sri Lanka Ratna' is the highest honour given by the Government of Sri Lanka for foreign nationals. In 2008, he received the Golden Plate Award of the American Academy of Achievement. In 2016, a new species of spider, 'Brignolia Ondaatje', discovered in Sri Lanka is named after him.

Anil's Ghost is a small, sudden glimpse into the soul of award winning poet and novelist Michael Ondaatje. Ondaatje explores both the extravagant beauty and the horrific civil war of his homeland, Sri Lanka. With swift prose, the readers are immediately immersed in his cathartic vision of an island's haunting history. Juxtaposition and fragments are central to the style and structure of *Anil's Ghost*. He narrates the forgotten history and cultural root of those who were massacred in the mindless violence of Sri Lankan civil war, particularly the common and the downtrodden people.

The pain agony of war victims is clearly examined through the reconstruction of skeletons. Ondaatje historicizes people who exist on the margins of canonical history. With this novel *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje gives voice to those who were unheard in the official history. He records them in art and literature as Sri Lankan artist Ananda reconstructs statue of Buddha. The novel opens with a scene in italics, in which the readers are introduced to Anil Tissera, forensic anthropologist returning to her native Sri Lanka to explore the current campaign of terror and the murder brought about by a vast ethnic war near the end of the 20th century. She articulates the first impression of the nation-wide trauma that results from the civil conflict, "she used to believe that meaning allowed a person a door to escape grief and fear. But she saw that those who were slammed and stained by violence lost the power of language and logic. It was the way to abandon emotion, a last protection of the self" (51-52), these lines communicates a sense of trauma that pervades Sri Lankan public and private life.

Anil and Sarath probe deeper into the mystery of the skeleton they have named 'Sailor', and find allies in forgotten members of Sri Lankan culture, such as Sarath's brother Gamini, the blind epigraphist Palipana and his young caretaker, and Ananda, a drunken widower with the abilities to paint death and restructure man, whose unusual artistry is commandeered in the violent climatic pages. The actions and thoughts of these and several other dramatically conceived characters often exude a hallucinating power and as often, unfortunately drain away the story's immediacy, in capriciously positioned flashbacks burned with explaining their past lives and present inter relationships. The readers become lost in the thickets of speculations and reverie.

Ondaatje allows the readers to witness Sri Lanka through the dream like perceptions of these characters. With *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje has abandoned some of the dense, lush prose. While his trademark poetic language remains, more dialogue and straight away narrative are included through this latest novel. Ondaatje's plot is mined with ingenious surprises, but the story's structure is relentlessly meditative and ruminative. As *Anil's Ghost* is less concerned with the intricate, intimate lives of its characters and more inspired by the heavy political climate of his homeland, it is out of his necessity that Ondaatje has chosen to use crisp, clean prose when dealing with a subject as complex as the civil uprisings of Sri Lanka. There is a constant ebb and flow of characters directly involved with the civil war. These characters range from murder victims to doctors and anthropologists. They remain distanced from the readers; they do serve Ondaatje's purpose of examining the inhabitants.

In *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje dissects the secret enemies, identity, memory, family and turbulent past of a lush country caught in the throes of the murders, betrayal and warfare. He examines and unfolds the intricate layers that make up Sri Lanka and its tumultuous inhabitants. As a believer of genealogy, Ondaatje makes the novel a reconstructed history of downtrodden people. Thus, the unheard history of the minority people, their culture is recuperated through the medium of art. History created by the official people and the history of marginal people has been clearly presented in his novel. Presenting the central character beyond the mainstream political, economical and social scenario Ondaatje confirms his affinity to the downtrodden people. It is also an opportunity of Sri Lankan people to know the hidden and suppressed history and their cultural root through the literary artifact. Ondaatje's fictional description of Sri Lanka and

its constant civil conflict primarily records in abundance the disappearances that have occurred and caused trauma for the Sri Lankans during the years. Traumatic reverberations are the traumatizing effects that have been faced by the characters in the novel and felt by the readers of the novel. "The trauma, it often seemed, was not evinced in the narrative component or in the ostensible meaning, but in a certain affective dynamic internal to the work". (Bennett 1)

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Dichotomy between Utopian and Dystopian Ideologies in

Celeste Ng's *Little Fires Everywhere*

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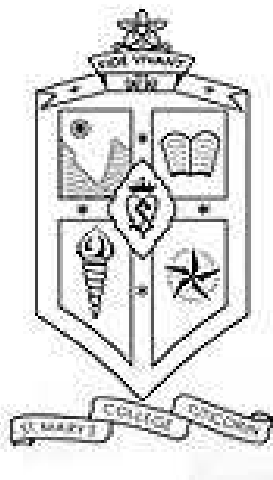
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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO
One	Introduction	1
Two	Ethical Motherhood	13
Three	Role of Order in Shaker Heights Community	28
Four	The Journey from Innocence to Maturity	39
Five	Summation	51
	Works Cited	59

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Dichotomy between Utopian and Dystopian Ideologies in Celeste Ng's *Little Fires Everywhere***, is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature, is a work done by X. Angel, during the year 2020 – 2021 and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Principal

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Dichotomy between Utopian and Dystopian Ideologies in Celeste Ng's *Little Fires Everywhere***, is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the Degree of Master of Arts, is my genuine effort and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar.

Thoothukudi

ANGEL. X

April 2021

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PREFACE

Celeste Ng has written only two novels, yet she deserves her own place in American Literature. She is one of the budding writers in contemporary American Literature. In 2018, “Entertainment Weekly” proclaimed Celeste Ng as ‘the novelist of the moment’.

Celeste Ng’s second novel, *Little Fires Everywhere*, is a crystal clear representation of family and teenage problems along with the different shades of motherhood. The story opens with a great fire in the Richardsons house. Then the story track the past to discover the truth behind this great fire. How did it happen? Who was responsible for the fire? What made that person create a big conflict? Investigating the truth behind the fire is the plot of this novel.

The first chapter throws light on Celeste Ng’s life, works and achievement in literature which proves Ng as the budding American author.

The second chapter investigates on the ethical motherhood and how it influences the personality of the young characters.

The third chapter explores on the role of order in the Shaker Heights community and how it creates chaos in the life of the characters.

The fourth chapter discovers the journey from innocence to maturity. In this chapter, the coming of age of the young characters is discussed.

The fifth chapter sums up all the preceding chapters. It also concludes with the scope for further research.

Chapter One

Introduction

American Literature refers to the literary works shaped in the history of the United States and its former colonies. America was once under the rule of Britain as part of the latter's colonies therefore its literary institution is associated with the expansive tradition of English Literature. Now American literature is considered a separate course and institution because of American characteristic features and the production of its literature. Before Columbus and other European colonizers discovered the Americans, the native people of the continent have no written alphabet but they expressed their artistic talents and passed on knowledge of their traditions in the form of chants, songs and spoken narratives.

American Literature is heavily influenced by English Literature because of the British Colonialism. Its tradition thus began as part of the broader tradition of English Literature. American literature began with the first English colonies in Virginia and New England. These colonists brought with them the literary wealth of their countries. Most of these Americans were the English migrants who began writing in the 16th century.

The American Revolutionary period is notable for the political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Paine. Thomas Jefferson's 'United States Declaration of Independence' proved his status as a key American Writer. It was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that the nation's first novels were published. An early example is William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* published in 1789. Brown's novel depicts a tragic love story between siblings who fall in love without knowing that they are related. This epistolary novel is related to the

sentimental novel tradition. During the next decade many novels were published which were written by many female writers. With an increasing desire to produce unique American literature and culture, a number of key new literary figures emerged, perhaps most prominently Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe.

In 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson started an influential movement known as Transcendentalism. Inspired by that movement, Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden*, which celebrates individualism and nature and urges resistance to the dictates of organized society. In the mid 19th century, Nathaniel Hawthorne published his Magnum opus *The Scarlet Letter*, a novel about adultery. The greatest poets of the 19th century were Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson.

American writers expressed disillusionment following World War I. The short stories and the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald captured the mood of the 1920s and John Dos Passos wrote about the First World War. In the 20th century American drama was dominated by Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, as well as the musical theatre. Depression era literature was blunt and direct in its social criticism. John Steinbeck notable for his novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1962) is a social oriented novel that tells the story of the Joads, a poor family from Oklahoma and their journey to California in search of a better life. From the 1990s to the present day the most salient literary movement has been postmodernism. The Noble Prize winner, Toni Morrison published her controversial debut novel *The Bluest Eye* in 1970. In this century, women writers also got inspiration from the contemporary Literature and started to write novels.

Celeste Ng is a notable American novelist of the 21st century, who was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on 30th July 1980. Her parents moved to the US from Hong

Kong in the late 1960s. Her father died in 2004. He was a physicist who worked for NASA at the Glenn Research Center, while her mother was a Chemist who taught at Cleveland State University. When Ng was ten her family moved from Pittsburgh to Shaker Heights, Ohio and she attended the schools in the Shaker Heights City School District. She graduated from high school in 1998. At Shaker Heights High School, Ng was involved with the student group on race relations for three years and was co-editor of the school's literary magazine, *Semanteme*.

Celeste Ng grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Shaker Heights, Ohio, in a family of Scientists. Ng attended Harvard University, where she completed a Bachelor of Art degree in English in 2002. She then attended graduate school at the University of Michigan's where she earned a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in writing. In the University of Michigan, Ng won the Hopwood Award for her short story, "What Passes Over".

Ng currently lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with her husband and son. While on a book tour for *Everything I Never Told You*, Ng stated that her favourite novels are *Harriet the spy* by Louise Fitzhugh and *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. Her fiction and essays have appeared in *One story*, *TriQuarterly*, *Bellevue literary Review* and *Kenyon Review Online*. Ng was the recipient of a Pushcart Prize in 2012 for her Short story 'Girls at play'.

Ng taught writing at the University of Michigan, and she also taught at Grub Street in Boston. Ng also was an editor of blogs at the website Fiction Writers Review for three years. Celeste Ng, author of the 2014 novel *Everything I Told You* and the 2017 novel *Little Fire Everywhere*, both of her novels are New York Times

bestsellers and recipients of multiple awards. Ng has been named the 2018 Ambassador for Independent Book Store Day.

Celeste Ng's debut Novel, *Everything I Never Told You*, is a literary thriller that focuses on an American family in 1970s Ohio. The novel had four drafts and one revision before completion, which took 6 years. While working on her first novel, Ng stated that she pulled from her own experiences of racism as well as her family and friends. The Los Angeles Times described the novel *Everything I Never Told You* as an "excellent first novel about family, love, and ambition". The first novel, *Everything I Never Told You* has also been translated into 15 languages.

Ng's first novel *Everything I Never Told You* won the Amazon Book of the year Award in 2014, beating out works by Stephen King and Hilary Mantel. It also received the 2015 Massachusetts Book Award, the American Library Association 2015 Alex Award, the Asian / Pacific Librarians Association Award for Literature (Adult Fiction) and the Medici Book Club Prize, and was a finalist for the Ohioana Book Awards, the John Creasey (New Blood) Dagger Award, and the VCU Cabell First Novelist Award.

Ng's second novel, *Little Fires Everywhere*, was released on September 12, 2017 and published by Penguin Press. The novel charts the story of two families in Shaker Heights Ohio. The novel, which the New York Times has called 'ambitious and accomplished', is currently being adapted for an eight-episode series on Hulu, starring Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington. Amazon's best book and best fiction of 2017, and was named the best book of the year by over 25 publications. It was also the winner of the Goodreads Choice Award 2017 in Fiction and published abroad in more than 20 countries. The novel was translated into 30 languages. In

March 2018, Entertainment weekly proclaimed that Ng has become ‘the novelist of the moment’.

Ng deals with motherhood in both her novels. The first novel, *Everything I Never Told You* takes place in the 70’s. The second novel, *Little Fires Everywhere* takes place in the 90’s. In both of these novels she highlights different character sketches of motherhood. In the 70’s women started to get career opportunities and were ready to lead lives that were very different from their mothers’ lives. The first novel, *Everything I Never Told You* based the feminist ideologies in motherhood. In *Little Fires Everywhere* Ng throws lights on different kinds of mothering, how each mother has different kinds of approach towards her children and different children need different types of mothering. Ng’s novels are not only based on the qualities of a good mother but they were deeply rooted on the personalities of the mothers.

Ng’s two novels start with a bang. *Everything I Never Told You* starts off with telling us that “Lydia is dead”. *Little Fires Everywhere* starts with “The house on fire”, because Ng wanted to let the readers know, where they are. Ng travels to her own past high-school days for her second novel, *Little Fires Everywhere*. The novel is set in the late 1990s in the Cleveland suburb of Shaker Heights. Once in an Interview she said “I really wanted to write about my hometown”, because she loves her native place and its customs very much. She continues “I think I had reached a stage where I’d been away long enough, so I could see it with a bit of distance. I loved growing up in Shaker Heights and I really miss it”.

Ng wants to contribute something to her native place that is Shaker Heights, Ohio, where the novel *Little Fires Everywhere* is set. She said that after being away from Shaker Heights for ten years, she appreciated more, all the ways. Shakes Heights

is unusual though Ng wanted to write a story that would explore some of those facets of the community.

Ng's second novel *Little Fires Everywhere* mainly focuses on the idealism of the community. She implied this spirit of idealism in her characters, to make the readers understand the customs of the community. Ng even gives a detailed analysis of the appearance of the community houses. The Richardson's family house is a good example for the houses in her community.

Transracial adoption of a Chinese baby is the main turning point in the novel *Little Fires Everywhere*. Ng wants to include the transracial adoption in the novel because this issue touches on class, race and motherhood simultaneously. In an interview for BLARB, Ng said "many adoptions today are transracial, which raises really complicated questions about how we handle and talk about race and racial bias in America". Ng beautifully expresses the feeling of the mother who adopts a child and to the contrary she also pinpoints the frustrated feeling of the mother who lost her own child in a pathetic situation.

Little Fires Everywhere is a catchy novel because Ng folds it with the ideal of motherhood. It is the story of mothers and daughters, and how they attract and repel each other. There are three types of mothers in this novel. There are the surrogate mother Mia and her daughter Pearl, the very formal and controlled Mrs. Richardson and her two teenage girls and Mrs. Richardson's friend Linda McCullough, who is trying to adopt a Chinese-American baby whose struggling mother would very much like to have her back.

Ng psychologically analyses two types of motherhood in human life. The first type of motherhood is the understanding of one's own mother. The second one is the

admiration of motherhood from other women. Ng likes to play with the controversial ideas of motherhood in human life. The mother roles switch back and forth in the novel because the Richardson's rebellious daughter Izzy is drawn to arty, independent Mia and Pearl is fascinated by the more conventional Mrs. Richardson.

The novel, *Little Fires Everywhere* is a Young Adult Fiction (YA). This YA Fiction is written for the readers from the age of twelve to eighteen years old. Though this genre focuses on adolescence, half of YA fiction readers are adults. These YA fictions mostly get the attention of the adults. In the countries like the USA and the UK the High Schools recommend these types of books for their syllabus.

The subject of this type of fiction is based on the age and experiences of the young protagonist. Common themes for this YA fiction are friendship, first love, relationships and identity. This YA fiction focused on the life and adventures of the young protagonist, mostly on the transformation of age from childhood to adulthood. Young Adult fictions are widely read by the adults, to experience the feelings of transformation in teenagers and recollect their own teenage memories because the Young Adult fictions partly have the qualities of childhood and partly the qualities of adulthood.

Teenage is the most important age in human life, because in this age, humans try to understand their own power to live and achieve their aim in life. The teenagers always want independence from their parents as they have attained their early adolescence. They try to lead an independent life and have some secrets about their lives. The teenagers always have the trouble to find out their identity. They have a complex relationship with their parents because of some hormonal changes in their body. They have a close relationship with their friends and their peers.

Sarah Trimmer is the early writer who recognized Young Adult fiction as a distinct category. In a children's Literature periodical, *The Guardian of Education*, Trimmer introduces the term "Books for Children", that is the children who are under fourteen and "Book for Young Persons", that is for the adolescence people who are from fourteen to twenty-one. Trimmer is the identifier of the Young Adult literature that still remains in use.

During the 19th and 20th centuries lots of fictions were produced that appealed to the teenagers, though they were not necessarily written based on the adventures and struggles of Young Adults. 21st century is the best age in which the young authors started to focus on the life of the young adults and this century produced lots of Young Adult fictions. Celeste Ng is one among these authors whose main aim is to elaborate the psychological changes of the adolescent people and try to teach some moral values to the young adults who vastly suffered from psychological problems in the modern technological era.

Ng's first novel *Everything I Never Told You*, charts about the secret world of the teenage protagonist Lydia, who became the puppet of her parents and felt harder to find out her own identity. Lydia lacks soul-satisfaction in her life, so she tries to make herself happier with her friends, which also gives pain to her because of her mixed yellow skin. Disappointed Lydia finally commits suicide in a great depression at the age of fifteen. Here Ng, try to analyse the reason behind Lydia's death and it is a great novel that guides the parents of biracial teenage children.

Ng's second novel *Little Fires Everywhere* talks about the world of mothers and their teenage daughters. To narrate this excellent story Ng ponders into her own teenage days and find out the difficulties in the relationship between young daughters

and their working mothers. The novel also elaborates the secret world of teenagers and how the teenagers try to keep their secrets 'like a dragon guards treasure' (Ng 37) from their parents. It also satirises the bonding between parents and children in the modern era. This novel also throws light on the immigrant parents who want to grow up their children in their own cultural roots.

Celeste Ng's best-selling novel *Little Fires Everywhere* is about two families in Ohio in the late 1990s captivated by Reese Witherspoon and then she teamed up with Kerry Washington to co-produce and co-star in a TV series adaption of the novel. In Celeste Ng's website, the story of *Little Fires Everywhere* explores "the weight of secrets, the nature of art and identity, and the ferocious pull of motherhood- and the danger of believing that following the rules can avert disaster".

The novel, *Little Fires Everywhere* released as an eight-episode limited series on March 18, 2020. All the episodes are exclusively available on Hulu. Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington cleverly enact the role of Elena and Mia. The controversial relationship of the two women moves the story. The teenage actors Jade Pettyjohn, Jordan Elsass, Gavin Lewis and Megan Stott are portrayed as Lexie, Trip, Moody and Izzy Richardson. Actor Joshua Jackson undertakes the role of Elena's husband that is Bill Richardson. The Actors Huang Lu acted as the Chinese mother Bebe, Jesse Williams as Joe Ryan, and Rosemarie DeWitt as Linda McCullough. The setting of the Hulu series brings the audience to the 90s and the magical music effects give more colours to the background of the story.

Jeffrey Waldron was the cinematographer on half of the eight episodes of the Hulu limited series *Little Fires Everywhere* along with Trevor Forrest. It was a unique collaboration between the two, as both were brought from the beginning and worked

together to create a seamless look for the show. Waldron was initially drawn in by the prose of Celeste Ng's novel of the same name, on which the series is based.

One of Waldron's biggest showcases on *Little Fires Everywhere* is Episode 2, titled "Seeds and All", when Mia (Washington) and Elena (Witherspoon) are having an intense bonding moment after a book club meeting. The close-up scenes of the two women who discuss the complexities of motherhood are more natural and effective in the film adaptation.

The soundtrack for Hulu's *Little Fires Everywhere* just screams "late 1990s". The sounds of the series are overflowing with Alanis Morissette, Liz Phair, and Lauryn Hill. Along with them Mia Warren (Kerry Washington) has her own soundtrack. The music in the series makes some of these moments incredibly intense and also brings the audience 20 years back.

The cover page of the novel *Little Fires Everywhere* contains different personalities and celebrities reviews about the wonderful novel which shows the fame and reach of the novel among the readers. Reese Witherspoon opines, the novel is a deep psychological mystery about the power of motherhood, the intensity of teenage love and the danger of perfection. It moved her to tears. Matt Haig praised the novel as a master class in characterisation.

Jodi Picoult points out that he read the novel *Little Fires Everywhere* in a single, breathless sitting. He wonders about the skill of the author and remarks, Celeste Ng with brilliance and beauty, dissects a microcosm of American society and brings the readers to see the American society beneath the microscope. Her novel *Little Fires Everywhere* is an example of the complex ideas in the human psychology that is how race stacks up against the comfort of privilege, what role race plays in

parenting and most importantly, how the faults of one's past determine what he deserves in the future.

The New York Times gives a marvellous review to the novel. One of the New York Times articles highlights the novel *Little Fires Everywhere* and points out, witnessing these two families as they commingle and clash is an utterly engrossing, often heartbreaking and deeply empathetic experience. Ng employs a vast and complex network of moral affiliations and the nuanced omniscient voice to navigate the secrets of the characters in the novel that make this novel even more ambitious and accomplished than her debut novel. The magic of this novel lies in its power to implicate all of its characters and likely many of its readers in that innocent delusion of a post-racial America.

Entertainment Weekly gives a great contribution to Ng and her novels. The article portrays that Ng widens her aperture to include a deeper, more diverse cast of characters. Though the book's language is clean and straightforward, almost conversational because Ng has an acute sense of how real people, especially teenagers, think and feel and communicate. The novel *Little Fires Everywhere* sets in Shaker Heights. It is a place where things were peaceful and riots, bombs and earthquakes were quiet thumps, muffled by distance. Entertainment Weekly gives Grade: A credit to the novel.

In the novel *Little Fires Everywhere* the two major themes which attract the readers a lot are motherhood and the customs in American communities. The novel also argues about identity and how identity affects human relationship. The power structure of the novel is based on women. As the novel is mostly narrated in women's

perspective, it became the bestseller of the year. The second chapter identifies the ethical motherhood in human life.

Chapter Two

Ethical Motherhood

Motherhood is the most beautiful and divine gift to a woman. Mothers are the backbones of everyone's success. They are the walking miracles. Mother is the most honourable judge and her heart is the most holy place where people get pardon to all their sins and that pure heart hesitates to punish her adorable children. The real salary to a mother's job is love and respect. Mother's divine heart couldn't expect glittering ornaments but it could expect the more precious love and care from their children at her old age. Sidney Callahan is an American writer and journalist. She talks about her own experience as a mother in an article "Virtual Mentor", under the title of "A Life of Mothering".

Motherhood is a drama in many acts that ends only with the death of the cast. . . . When a woman becomes a mother she is changed forever, physically and psychologically. An intimate lifelong relationship begins with a new human being who is fully her responsibility.
(Callahan, Sidney, 2013, p. 798)

To Callahan, motherhood is a drama. Like Shakespeare, Callahan compares mother to an actor and life to the drama. Motherhood is not merely about the tender and warm relationship between mother and her children but it carries countless responsibilities, sacrifices and lots of love. Sidney Callahan defines:

Motherhood is constituted of an irreversible, committed relationship between a mother and another unique human being who is dependent on her. A mother possesses responsibility for a mutual relationship that

is dedicated to the survival, thriving, and social flourishing of her beloved charge. It takes energy to give unconditional love and think intelligently about another's best interest. (Callahan, Sidney, 2013, p. 798)

Like Sidney Callahan, Celeste Ng contributes a whole novel to motherhood. Ng's second novel *Little Fires Everywhere* focuses on the ethical motherhood in American Society. Though motherhood is a general feeling to the world, this sweet relationship is deeply rooted in culture. A mother confines her children with such cultural boundaries. This tender motherhood also has its own 'good' and 'bad' like the thorns in a beautiful flower. Ng throws light on two dimensions of a mother's character and different kinds of motherhood because each child needs a specific motherly care.

Ng beautifully sketches the criss-cross mentality of young adults who need a more special and friendly mother. The adults always admire things because of their new social conducts. They also admire different kinds of mothering from the society. It is clear that Ng plays with these two kinds of motherhood in her second novel *Little Fires Everywhere*. The novel opens with fire in the Richardson's house. This fire is lit by the youngest daughter Izzy. The story takes the readers to the mirror of past and explores the truth behind this fire. The reason behind the fire is the passionate and ethical motherhood.

The novel, *Little Fires Everywhere* points out four kinds of mothers and their daughters. The first one is the transient mother, Mia and her daughter Pearl. The second one is, Mrs. Richardson and her two teenage daughters Lexie and Izzy. The

third one is, Mrs. McCullough and her adopted daughter, Mirabelle. The fourth one is Bebe Chow who is the real mother of the Chinese infant May Ling (Mirabelle).

The story of the novel *Little Fires Everywhere* takes place during the 1990s. In the previous June, Mia Warren and her fifteen-years-old daughter Pearl have just arrived to the Richardson's rental house on the Winslow Road. Mr and Mrs. Richardson know that Mia is an unmarried single mother who managed to pay the monthly rental. Mia has a beautiful teenage daughter, Pearl. Through flash back, Pearl expresses her past transient life to the Richardsons' third son Moody. Pearl and Mia always live a transient life. They travel with a few possessions and go everywhere in the car. During their travel, they sleep in their car and continue their journey "until Mia found a spot that, felt right" (34). Pearl emphasizes that her mother promised her that two of them are going to stay in Shaker Heights forever. Ng depicts:

To Moody, this kind of existence was all but unfathomable. . . . like a magic trick, as miraculous as transforming an empty soda can into silver pitcher, or pulling steaming pie from a silk top hat. NO, he thought: it was like watching Robinson Crusoe conjure up a living out of nothingness (33).

Moody brings Pearl to his elegant house, where Pearl is admired by the large, pristine and dreamlike family. She likes Mrs. Richardson's order and art of cooking food for her children because Mia just brings the left over from the restaurants for Pearl to feed. The strong familial identity admires her a lot. The affectionate and fascinating Mrs. Richardson is of particular interest to Pearl, like *The Brady Bunch* TV show mom. A mother figure who is expected to behave like a 'TV Mom' to Pearl is entirely foreign to Pearl's life experience. Her fascination with Mrs. Richardson

foreshadows the complicated relationship between Pearl and Mia's own relationship. This makes Pearl create an ideal image of a mother.

Mia on seeing her daughter's new relationship with the Richardson's family, feels happy and grateful to Pearl because she feels guilty for having made Pearl live according to her own desires. Soon, she is worried about the Richardson's influence on Pearl, though Mia remains quiet because of her guilty conscience. Pearl is fascinated by the order in the Richardson's house, which is not possible to their transient existence.

Pearl develops a friendly relationship with the Richardson's elder daughter, Lexie. During afternoons Pearl spends her time in the Richardson's house. One day, Lexie questions Pearl about her father and mocks at her, if he may be an old boyfriend of her mother or a rapist. This question upsets Pearl a lot and that evening, Pearl enquires Mia about her father. Mia refuses to answer and jokes that she found her in a "bargain bin" or a "Cabbage patch" (50). That night, Pearl asks her mother if she is wanted as a baby. Mia begins to cry and Pearl is shocked about her mother's reaction. Then Mia declares to Pearl that, she is wanted "very, very much" (51) and quickly leaves the room. This question foreshadows the depth of their past and creates eagerness to the readers.

Mia and Pearl believe that both mother and daughter are open to one another but to the contrast it is an illusion. One day the Richardson's elder children and Pearl are asked to attend a weekend party by a rich girl, Stacie Perry. Pearl goes to the party and returns home at late night. Pearl's new habits upset Mia. She says "this is what teens do" (73) but she knows her daughter very well and hopes she may always choose the right path among the other children of Richardson. The mother and

daughter possess some secrets within them. Pearl hides her affair with the Richardson's second son, Trip from her mother. To Mia's turn she covers Pearl's past identity from her.

Mrs. Richardson with a tender heart offers her house keeping work to Mia and she agrees to work to pay her rent. Pearl is privately angry with her mother because her arrival will intrude on her relationship with the Richardsons. Mia realizes that her daughter's identity shifts with the world around her and she feels, her daughter drifting away from her. She knows that Pearl is always different from the other teenagers but now Pearl has "a more normal life" (73).

In the Richardson's kitchen, Izzy meets Mia for the first time. She introduces herself as "The crazy one" (57). She explains to Mia about her suspension from the school. Izzy breaks down the Music teacher Mrs. Peter's violin bow because she uses some racist remarks on one of Izzy's kindest classmate, Deja Johnson. She expresses her frustration to suspend her for supporting the truth. Mia asks Izzy, what she plans to take revenge against her circumstances. Izzy never expects this question because it looks like manipulative words but Mia tries to prove to Izzy about her agency over her life and choices.

With Mia's approval Izzy, Moody and Pearl played a major disruption in their school and get success in their plan. Izzy feels happier and goes to Mia's house in Winslow. Izzy begs Mia to allow her to become her photography assistant. Izzy is ready to work under Mia's wing. A new chapter in a mother-daughter relationship starts from here. Izzy goes to Mia's house every day afternoon, after the school and requests Mia to teach photography. One day Izzy tells Mia that Mrs. Richardson has a plan for everything. Izzy emphasises that she hates these orders. Izzy points out that

her mother hates her but Mia refuses this statement and explains to Izzy that her mother and Izzy have a peculiar dynamic, in their relationship. Mia assures that Mrs. Richardson loves Izzy very much. Mrs. Richardson's special care represents her unconditional love towards her daughter Izzy.

Izzy and Mia begin to spend their afternoons together and Izzy pretends that Mia is her true mother. On the other side, Pearl fantasies herself as the member of the Richardson's house. She is happy about her mother's new little friend Izzy, who compensate her absence with her mother. Both girls are living in a sort of fantasy version of each other's lives.

On a class trip, Moody and Pearl have gone to special art museum, called Madonna and child. There they encounter a black and white photography which looks like Mia and infant Pearl. The print is attributed to an artist named Pauline Hawthorne and titled *Virgin and Child # 1* (1989). While looking at the picture Pearl reminds her shared bond with her mother, because, they are now in a difficult moment in their relationship. In the afternoon, the children inquire Mia about the photography. Mia pretends that she couldn't remember all those things to protect her and Pearl's past. Pearl feels regretful to put her mother on the strange spot.

Izzy's "deep hunger to unravel this mysterious photography" (114) about Mia's past, helps her understand Mia very much. She needs her mother's help in her research about Mia's past and the photography. Izzy and Mrs. Richardson experience a moment of strength in their bond when Izzy acknowledges her mother's talent and capabilities. Mrs. Richardson flattered by Izzy's passion for journalism because still she suspects Mia's past. Mrs. Richardson, though initially inspired by Izzy's faith in her, finds herself questioning her capability as a journalist and identity as a mother.

There is misunderstanding between Mrs. Richardson and Izzy because Mrs. Richardson always wants to push her power and order over Izzy which makes the girl hates her most. Ng elucidates:

Everything Mrs. Richardson had put out of her mind from the hospital stay —everything she thought she'd forgotten—her body remembered on a cellular level: the rush of anxiety, the fear that permeated her thoughts of Izzy. The microscopic focus on each thing Izzy did, turning it this way and that, scrutinizing it for signs of weakness or disaster. (125)

Mrs. Richardson has feared Izzy's well-being every moment since her birth and thus attempts to control her. Mrs. Richardson reflects on the reasons of her difficult relationship with her younger daughter, Izzy. Izzy was born eleven weeks earlier because of Mrs. Richardson's illness and bed ridden during her pregnancy. Izzy spends months in hospital and then starts her normal life. Mrs. Richardson has continued to scan Izzy and worries about Izzy's health throughout her childhood, placing a 'microscopic focus' on everything Izzy did. Mr. Richardson, always advised her to let Izzy for her own, but Mrs. Richardson refused to leave her alone.

After a week, the Richardsons are invited to attend a birthday party by the friends the McCulloughs. Moody and Izzy want to invite Pearl, but Mrs. Richardson rejects and points out "Pearl is not part of the family" (129). Though Mrs. Richardson is more concerned with Pearl, she is just inside her own family circle. She is not ready to accept Pearl like her own children. Pearl is unaware of the intension of Mrs. Richardson and continues to admire Mrs. Richardson's motherly qualities.

Mirabelle McCullough is the birth day girl. The McCulloughs are on the process of the adaptation of the Asian girl, who they find near the fire station. Izzy enquires Mrs. McCullough that why they are trying to change Mirabelle's identity because they give a false birthday to the infant and change her birth name. Mrs. McCullough replies to Izzy that she wants to give Mirabelle a new name to "celebrate the start of her new life" (132). Mrs. Richardson is very much upset about Izzy's misbehaviour.

The next afternoon Lexie talks about Mirabelle and her miraculous adaptation with Mia. Mia takes part time job, in the Lucky palace and remembers the strange words of her co-worker Bebe Chaw. A year before Bebe Chaw leaves her child near a fire station because of poverty and postpartum depression. Bebe expresses her longing to find out her baby. Mia realises that Mirabelle is the same baby who Bebe leaves near the fire station. Mia knows "Bebe...was desperate to find her daughter again" (138). Mia empathizes with Bebe and informs Bebe about the new adaptation of Mirabelle and asks her to speak with McCulloughs.

Bebe Chaw has been thrown out by the McCulloughs and Mr. McCullough repeats "You have no right to be here. You have no right to be here" (144). Bebe shares her pathetic situation with Mia and acknowledges "I am her *mother*" (145). Disappointed Bebe asks Mia, what to do next. Mia empathises that if she is in her situation then she will "fight this fight" (146). Mia's attachment to her own identity as a mother is a strong motivation behind her actions and she wants to rebuild a new chapter in the mother-daughter relationship.

Bebe has begun to merge as a disturbing figure in Shaker Heights. News channels try to collect more information related to this case. The reporters interview

Mrs. McCullough who has refused to answer. The following evening, the channels release footage of a “slender white woman, looking angry and afraid, clutching a screaming Asian baby in her arms” (147). Then the news team conducts an interview with Bebe, who expresses her anguish and emphasize that a child belongs to her mother. In a weeping tone Bebe informs:

“I make a mistake,” she said, every syllable carefully enunciated.

“Now I have a good job. I have my life together now. I want my baby back. These McCulloughs have no right adopt a baby when her own mother wants her. A child belong with her mother.” (148).

The interview is entitled as *Adoptions are about giving new homes to children who don't have families, but what if the child already has a family?* The ‘little fire’ of Bebe’s claim on May Ling has begun to spread all over the Shaker Heights communities.

Mrs. Richardson is angry with Mia about her friendship with Bebe. She knows that Mia is the one, who lit the fire and informed Bebe about Mirabelle. Mrs. Richardson believes that Mrs. McCullough has the right to be May Ling’s mother. She finds out that Mia is the back bone to Bebe’s action and decides to attack Mia’s identity as mother to emotionally break her down. Meanwhile Bebe has attained the visitation rights with her daughter. Bebe hopes, that she is on the path to reclaims her identity as a mother. Mrs. Richardson plans to take a trip to Pennsylvania to solve the mystery of Mia’s past. Mrs. Richardson has arrived at the Wrights house in Pittsburgh. She introduces herself as a journalist and asks question about Mia’s past. The Wrights tell her that they cut ties with Mia when she came home for her brother Warren’s funeral carrying a baby for a couple called the Ryans.

During her childhood days, Mia was very much interested in Photography. In 1979, Mia applied to the New York school for Fine Arts with a series of photographs. Her teacher, Pauline Hawthorne, has taken her under her wings but her education has cut short because of lack of funds to provide her scholarship. To pay her college fees, Mia has agreed to act as a surrogate for a wealthy couple, the Ryans. Mrs. Ryan is unable to give birth to a baby because she was born without a uterus. Mia hides her pregnancy from her family members except her brother, Warren. Warren is very much disappointed with his sister's decision but couldn't share this secret with their parents. Unfortunately Warren died in an accident. Mia goes to her house with the baby in her womb, to attend the funeral.

Mia's parents are angered by her pregnancy. Mia reveals that the Ryans are paying her and her parents ill-treat her for selling her own child. They refused to speak to her and deny permit her to attend the funeral for the fear of others' misunderstanding about her pregnancy. Mia is denied her identity as Warren's sister as a result of her new identity as a mother. Her parents are unable to believe that she would use her motherhood for profit even though Mia insists on helping the Ryans to get a new light.

Mia writes a letter to the Ryans in which she lies "I lost the baby. I'm so ashamed and so sorry" (264). She sets off on a road trip across the country that has notably never ended. Mia has reached San Francisco and gives birth to Pearl. She names her daughter Pearl, after reading the novel *The Scarlet Letter* because the baby was born in complicated circumstances. Mia registers her name as Mia Warren in the birth certificate. She erases her heritage and adopts a new identity for herself and for her daughter. Mia's difficulties mirror the difficulties of Bebe Chaw. This makes Mia take the case more seriously. Mia has financial and mental stability to raise her

daughter but Bebe is abandoned by the society because of her Chinese heritage. Lack of money and mental depression leads her to leave her baby near the fire station.

Lexie's secret relationship with her boyfriend leads her to her early pregnancy. She plans to abort the fetus, when her mother has gone to Pittsburgh. After the abortion, Lexie feels weaker and Pearl takes her to their house in Winslow. Mia finds out the difficult situations and asks Lexie to take some rest in her house. Mia takes care of Lexie, due to her mother's absence. Lexie gets a maternal comfort from Mia, who she never thought would like her. Mia is not Lexie's mother but she knows how to mother someone when one is in need. She supports and comforts Lexie which she needs at the difficult time. Her pampering to Lexie is more than Lexie's own mother might have been able to provide for her. Lexie has made a difficult choice about motherhood which alluded with Bebe Chaw's abandonment. It is clear that Lexie and Bebe are unsure about their future. To the contrast Mia firmly believes that she and her daughter have a future. Some are calling Bebe an unfit mother but Mia believes that she must deserve a second chance. Mia says that everyone makes mistakes and does things that they regret in future.

During the court hearing, the McCulloughs' lawyer Mr. Richardson and Bebe's lawyer Ed Lim argue their point of views. Ed Lim gives reason to Bebe's abandonment with May Ling. She argues that Bebe is a very poor and weak immigrant who has been unable to produce milk for her baby. Bebe is unable to seek psychological help due to language barriers in migrated country. It is clear that Bebe left her child at a fire station and her faith to reassert her right to motherhood has symbolically been represented a little fire in her life.

On the final day of the hearing, Mrs. McCullough is called to the stand. Mr. Richardson suggests May Ling would really be better off in the care of the McCulloughs, who are able to provide a luxurious life for her. Bebe Chow's lawyer, Ed Lim, makes it clear that while the McCulloughs would no doubt be fit and loving parents, they would be unable and even unwilling to raise May Ling with any authentic or meaningful connection to Chinese culture. The Judge is unable to make a decision.

Lexie breaks up with her boyfriend and needs the wings of Mia to make her feel more comfortable. Lexie's life has experienced two major disruptions, yet once again she seeks comfort from Mia, not from her own mother. Like Izzy, Lexie begins to seek Mia out when she is in need of help, guidance or emotional support. Pearl, to the contrast continues to make distance with Mia to become more intimate to the Richardsons.

Mrs. McCulloch tells Mrs. Richardson that, before some days Bebe looks weak. She suspects if she has aborted a baby. Mrs. Richardson is anxious to hear this new information about Bebe and thinks if they prove this in the court then they will get Mirabelle easily. Mrs. Richardson has gone to her friend's hospital to find out Bebe's abortion. There she notices Pearl's name in the record and misunderstands that Pearl aborts Moody's baby. The following evening she comforts Moody. Moody refuses this accusation and suspects that if it may be his elder brother, Trip. Mrs. Richardson blames Pearl without the knowledge of truth. It is Lexie who enrolled her name as Pearl in the hospital record. This secret about her children upsets Mrs. Richardson and she tries to question her motherhood, though she does not question how 'ethical' she is.

The next day Mr. Richardson calls Mrs. Richardson and informs her that the judge has made a decision and the McCullough has won custody of Mirabelle, so now Mirabelle officially owned by McCulloughs. The hidden fact behind this case is, Bebe is an immigrant, so there is no justice for her in the migrated country. Mrs. McCullough's identity as a mother has been confirmed by the state order. Agitated Bebe needs comfort at Mia's house. Izzy smells something strange in Shaker Heights. In the afternoon she knocks at Mia's door and asks, "if Bebe will be all right" (341). Izzy is frightened by Bebe's screams of anguish, so Mia asks Izzy to return home.

The next morning when Pearl and the Richardson's children have gone to school, Mrs. Richardson goes to Mia's house to confront Mia and tries to threaten her about her past identity as a mother. Mia's is surprised to see Mrs. Richardson. Mrs. Richardson gets annoyed with Izzy's jacket in Mia's table. She thinks, "as if Izzy lived here, as if this were her home, as if she were Mia's daughter, not Mrs. Richardson's own" (248). Mrs. Richardson has little jealousy about Mia's relationship with her daughters. She realizes that she has lost control over her daughters, who now see Mia as a motherly figure. She threatens Mia that she knows everything about Mia and the Ryans. Mrs. Richardson proudly points out that she knows what she has done for Bebe Chaw and she also knows one more secret about Pearl which Mia couldn't find out till now.

Mrs. Richardson scolds Mia that she is doing injustice to the Ryan. She throws arrows on Mia's heart and asks if she allows her daughter to meet her parents. Mia stunned by the enquiry of Mrs. Richardson starts to cry. She replies to Mrs. Richardson that, each one has her own rights to live and questions why she does all these things. Mrs. Richardson accuses that Pearl knows the answer and orders Mia to vacate the house.

That afternoon Mia arrives early to pick up Pearl from the school. Mia requests Pearl to follow her to another place. Disappointed and shattered Pearl, cries and questions why she is doing like this. She throws a book in the wall with fury to express her anger and remembers Mia about her promise to stay in Shaker Heights. Finally Mia reveals the truth, regarding Pearl's parents. After hearing this truth Pearl is broken very much but ready to follow her mother without a question. Mia tells her about Mrs. Richardson's rudeness and worries to shatter her daughter's admiration with Mrs. Richardson. She also promises Pearl to take her to her parents but Pearl refuses and tells that she is not mentality prepared to digest her true identity. Izzy recognises that something wrong has happened in Mia's house and she has gone to Mia's house. Mia emphasis:

“Remember what I said the other day?” she said. “About the prairie fires? About how sometimes you need to scorch everything to the ground and start over?” Izzy nodded. “Well,” Mia said. . . . “Just remember that,” she finished. “Sometimes you need to start over from scratch. Can you understand that?” Izzy wasn't sure she did, but she nodded again. (360)

Mia informs a metaphor of a prairie fire, which scorches the earth and depletes 'everything green', but leaves the soil richer after the burning is done. Mia sends Izzy to her house, even forgets to say a final 'good bye' to lovely Izzy.

The next morning Izzy identifies that Pearl and Mia have left their house. Izzy is overwhelmed by the unfairness of Pearl and Mia's situation. Izzy is distraught by her family's betrayals of the Warrens. She decides to burn down her house. She takes Mia's word as a sense inspiration and lights a match to burn down the order of their

house. Later that afternoon, Mr. Richardson checks his voicemail to find a message from the distraught McCulloughs, in which they tell him that May Ling disappeared in the night. May Ling has been taken by Bebe, and the two have absconded to China. Bebe regains control over her own circumstances in the end, though her methods are dubious and perhaps harmful.

Izzy is ready to set out to find out Mia and Pearl. She takes the address of the Wrights and Anita Reese who helps Mia to sell her pictures. While searching she fantasies herself that, finally she finds Mia and Pearl and happily rejoins with them. Her actions argue that not biology but love and care make a family. Pearl and Mia are shown to be believers of the truth that love but not biology makes a family. They also feel sad to leave Izzy behind and wish to bring her along with them. Here Mia imagines herself that she meets Izzy at the road side and hugs her and brings Izzy with her.

Mrs. Richardson is frustrated with her daughter Izzy's loss and questions her identity as a mother once again. Throughout the day she has been angry with Izzy. She thinks Izzy has crossed a line and "she might never be back" (387). Mrs. Richardson thinks she must look 'crazy' to her neighbours, but she does not care. She sobs, distraught, her heart shattering as she thinks of Izzy alone in the world. Mrs. Richardson's order makes her as crucial mother though her love towards her daughter remains rooted in her heart. The third chapter explores on the role of order in the Shaker Heights community and how it creates chaos in the life of the characters.

Chapter Three

Role of Order in Shaker Heights Community

Shaker Heights is founded in 1912 and situated on the eastern side of Cleveland, Ohio. It is famous for its planned garden-city design, neo-traditional architecture and green spaces. The city of Shaker Heights preserves many of the traditional ideals of its primary builders, the brothers Oris Paxton and Mantis James Van Sweringen. Shaker Heights has grown in many important ways over its first 100 years. This is due to its solid foundation like careful planning, consistent and proactive leadership and residents who are deeply committed to the prosperity of the community.

The North Union Shakers, a utopian religious sect, settled here in 1822. They are known as The Valley of God's Pleasure. The colony comprises several mills, farms, a Meeting House and a school. When Cleveland emerged as an industrial metropolis, the dreams of the North Union Shakers faded. Horseshoe Lake, the Lower Lakes and a handful of streets are the remarkable places of the Shaker community. In 1905, business partners and brothers Oris Paxton and Mantis James Van Sweringen have begun purchasing the 1,366 acres to develop a scenic residential suburb. They have based their plans on the popular Garden City movement. Their development named Shaker Village is incorporated in 1912 which preserved the natural landscape and provided residents with an easy access to greater Cleveland.

The brothers have implemented strict development guidelines for setbacks, building heights, architectural styles, planted spacious and lush tree lawns. They have created an intentional hierarchy of streets. The street names have been chosen from an old English postal directory to limit traffic in residential neighbourhoods for a quiet,

idyllic ambiance. Engineers have dammed Doan Brook to form Marshall and Green Lakes, as well as some of the choicest properties in Shaker Village.

Rapid growth of the suburb is continued along with construction of block after block of architecturally unique and distinguished homes. Each home is designed within one of three sanctioned styles. They are English, French or Colonial. These houses become an enduring asset for the City of Shaker Heights which is officially established in 1931. In 1947, the Shaker Historical Society was founded to preserve and promote the history of the North Union Shakers. Today, their mission includes the legacy of the Van Sweringens and more modern achievements of Shaker Heights.

Mary Kilpatrick is a content writer, who writes about Shaker Heights in her article, which is titled as 'Shaker Heights which is considered 12th best suburb in America'. Mary Kilpatrick also remarks that Shaker Heights has earned its national rank in part because of its good homely values and public schools. The city scored well on its cost of living and diversity. Its lowest score C- was for the weather, which is based on sunny days, precipitation and average temperatures. It could not receive a score for crime.

Little Fires Everywhere is Celeste Ng's acclaimed 2017 novel, set in Shaker Heights. The novel is well on its way to becoming a series when veteran TV writer and producer Liz Tigelaar has approached about handling the delicate transition from printed page to streaming drama. During a telephone interview Tigelaar admires:

It would be very tough not to connect to Celeste's writing. She's such a beautiful writer and she did a wonderful job drawing on her own experiences in this world. And there's so much resonance and relevance to what she writes. (Tigelaar, Liz)

The Hulu team has tried their best to give life to the 1990s Shaker Heights city to do justice to the novel. The novel *Little Fires Everywhere* is well known for its excellent and picturesque description about the suburb Shaker Heights. Celeste Ng contributes this novel to her native town. She has clearly portrayed the minute details and order of her own community which moulded her in her childhood days. She has encouraged the strength of the city and criticized its strict rules and orders.

The novel *Little Fires Everywhere* set in the 90s opens on an ordinary May Saturday in Shaker Heights, Ohio. The Richardson family's house has burned down in a raging fire and Izzy, the youngest of the Richardson children, is the suspected one because there is evidence of an accelerant and the little fires has set throughout the house. The fire engines are rushing to find a grand Tudor-style Shaker Heights home engulfed in flames. The Richardsons, are further alarmed because their troubled and 'little lunatic' daughter, Izzy is missing.

The following summer, the residents of Shaker Heights will come to discuss amongst themselves this great fire and disorder of the Richardsons family which is a favourite habit of the orderly and tight-knit community of Shaker Heights. Neighbours and the police gather and watch the flames, while in the pond across the street geese swim peacefully. Ng has used irony to lay emphasis on the contrasting nature of the people and geese in Shaker Heights. The people in Shaker Heights are well matured to follow orders contrary to the geese that are playing peacefully without any order in the pond. The story begins at its climatic conclusion and then jumps back to the events leading to these points. Ng illustrates:

A police cruiser . . . watched the firefighters unreel their hoses with the grim faces of men who recognized a hopeless cause. Across the

street, the geese at the pond ducked their heads underwater for weeds, wholly unruffled by the commotion. (2)

Shaker Heights is governed by many unspoken ways and rules, often both strict and obscure. As Mia and Pearl settle in, they begin to learn the rules. They must write the word 'Up' following their new address, so that their mail is delivered to them and not to the downstairs tenant, Mr. Yang. Each property has a 'tree lawn' a strip of grass which separates the sidewalk from the street. Throughout the city, garbage cans must be left in the rear of the house, never dragged out to the curb. Garages are also placed at the backs of properties in order to maintain a pleasant, streamlined appearance. Lawns must never be allowed to grow more than six inches tall, which the Warrens learn when Mr. Yang takes a trip to Hong Kong and leaves the lawn unmowed resulting in a polite but stern letter from the city. Ng indicates;

They learned that an unmowed lawn would result in a polite but stern letter from the city, noting that their grass was over six inches tall and that if the situation was not rectified, the city would mow the grass—and charge them a hundred dollars—in three days. There were many rules to be learned. (11)

The many rules that permeate every aspect of life in Shaker Heights are presented through the text in a rapid and matter of fact manner. The Warrens are overwhelmed by the abundance of strict regulations and unseen mechanisms that keep the city in order.

Ng also gives importance to historical references about Shaker Heights to make the readers understand the atmosphere under a micro scope. Each house in Shaker Heights is built in either Tudor, English or French style and each style can

only be painted in some different colour. Shaker is one of the nation's first planned communities, laid out in 1912 and the 'underlying philosophy' of Shaker is,

Lexie would have said—"Most communities just happen; the best are planned": the underlying philosophy being that everything could—and should—be planned out, and that by doing so you could avoid the unseemly, the unpleasant, and the disastrous. (12)

Mrs. Richardson proudly introduces the customs of the suburb Shaker Heights with her new tenants Pearl and Mia. She looks at Pearl and informs that Shaker Schools are the best schools in Cleveland and "She quoted the Shaker schools' motto: *A community is known by the schools it keeps*" (16 – 17). One day Pearl asks Moody, "take me to see the Shakers" (25). Moody laughs and explains that "There aren't any Shaker is Shaker Heights" (25) because all have died. Ng points out that "Moody was half right" (25) because the kids of the town have a shallow knowledge about its history.

Ng narrates the history of Shaker Heights to the readers that, in 1997 there were only twelve Shakers left in the world. Shakers have indeed founded Shaker Heights with the idea of creating a harmonious utopia through principles of order and regulation. They have believed that order is the key to harmony. At the time of the community's inception, everything had been regulated in order to create "a patch of heaven on earth, a little refuge from the world." (26). As a result of this strict organization, even the teens of Shaker Heights retain a 'drive for perfection'. Ng illustrates;

Perfection: that was the goal, and perhaps the Shakers had lived it so strongly it had seeped into the soil itself, feeding those who grew up

there with a propensity to overachieve and a deep intolerance for flaws. Even the teens of Shaker Heights—whose main exposure to Shakers was singing “Simple Gifts” in music class—could feel that drive for perfection still in the air. (26)

Celeste Ng criticizes Shaker Heights people and how they are clinging to an ideal of regulation and discipline. Over the course of the novel, Ng shows that every person, family and community must sometimes confront disorder in life. This point clearly expresses an idea that regulation and discipline, causes only failure to the people, even though they give priority to order rather than strength. The relationship between order and chaos has played an important role in the lives of the characters which cause disarray to them. The characters, who try to break the order, are more comfortable and happier than others. Ng opines that, in the progress of the novel the characters that seemed to have, all family members together, begin to fall apart and those who live transient lives are to make clear progress, towards plans, order and rule making for the unity of the family.

Mrs. Ricahrdson is the significant character who embodies this micro-managerial commitment to order and regulation. She was born and brought up in Shaker Heights. Since her childhood her parents have taught values in following rules in order to maintain society status. This ideology about order and discipline has firmly rooted in her mind. Her family too is immersed in her rules and values, and subject to her attempts at total control.

Mrs. Ricahrdson has a powerful hand, over her children particularly in Izzy, who she considers as lunatic. In addition, she also tries to control Mia, Pearl, Mia’s parents, her friend Elizabeth and her other tenants, at their rental house. Mrs.

Richardson derives great pleasure in controlling others, and loves to check her tenets, housekeeping methods, to ensure that if they are following the rules of the community correctly. Mrs. Richardson slips further and further into personal disarray, after she has to lose her ability to control the surrounding people, the circumstances of her life, her children's lives and the case of her friends the McCulloughs.

At the end of the novel, *Little Fires Everywhere* Mrs. Richardson burst out in a massive fight with Mia. Mia accuses Mrs. Richardson for taking out the misery. Mia criticises that Mrs. Richardson spent her life obsessed with plans, order and regulations on everyone around her. When Izzy runs away at the novel's end Mrs. Richardson experiences only the second loss of control over Izzy. For the first time she feels this loss at the premature birth of Izzy. Mrs. Richardson finally realizes that her allegiance to order has ultimately failed both her and her children, and left all their lives in disarray.

The Richardson children, inadvertently or deliberately invite disorder into their lives, despite having grown up in an orderly community and within a strict family. They are embodying a blend of the order with which they grew up and the rule-breaking to which they are drawn. Lexie is the most orderly person of the children, who is more conscious about her life, like her mother. She plans to go to Yale and dreams of marrying her black boyfriend. She subverts the status quo though, when she accidentally becomes pregnant and seeks to restore order by getting an abortion. Like his sister Lexie, Trip justifies his secret affairs through heavily regulating his bad behaviours. When he and Pearl begin to sleep together, Trip arranges their meetings on a careful schedule to avoid being caught. Though this is somehow humorous to the readers, Ng clearly points out that how order, psychologically influences the lives of Richardson children.

While Lexie and Trip try to appear orderly, their sister Izzy openly invites disorder, since she finds the regulations of her family and community to be harmful and hypocritical. Her rebellion ranges from the purely symbolic, refusing to participate in the dance recital to the outright destructive and she sets the house on fire after discovering her family's many slights against Mia and Pearl. This complex mingling of order and disorder is also embodied in the siblings' daily routine of watching the Jerry Springer TV Show together. The Show portrays people from different social background and pinpoints the disorder in families, marital relationships and illegal affairs and gives solution to their problems. They are fascinated by the disruption of order and authority that they see on the show, which demonstrates that despite their upbringings, they are attracted to chaos. The lunatic Izzy always behaves differently from her siblings. She is not interested in this Jerry Springer show and spends her valuable time in practising violin at home. Ng gives psychological reason to the admiration of the Richardson children towards this show. She points out:

To Moody, it was a fascinating psychological study, every episode another example of just how strange humanity could be. To Lexie, it was akin to anthropology. . . And to Trip, the whole thing was pure comedy: a glorious slapstick spectacle, complete with bleeped-out tirades and plenty of chair throwing. . . Izzy found the whole thing unspeakably idiotic and barricaded herself upstairs, practicing her violin. (46)

While the Richardson children flirt with disorder, the Warren family, whose life has always been chaotic and nomadic, aspires to the orderly life of Shaker Heights. After so many years of living a transient lifestyle, Mia, a "struggling artist"

and Pearl, her free-spirited daughter, adjust their behaviour to fit in with the Shaker Heights norms in hopes of being accepted into the community. For Pearl, who longs to fit in somewhere, the clear rules and norms of Shaker Heights seem to offer her, a roadmap to the life she wants. She finds herself on what she believes is the road to earning their total acceptance, through her following of the Richardsons' 'rules' and her adoption of some of their behaviours. Ng captures the feelings of Pearl in powerful words;

It was as if instead of entering a house she was entering the *idea* of a house, some archetype brought to life here before her. Something she'd only heard about but never seen. She could hear signs of life in far-off rooms - the low mumble of a TV commercial, the beep of a microwave running down its count - but distantly, as if in a drama. (38)

Mia is more reluctant to embed herself in the community, and into the Richardson family, but it is she who is perhaps the most devastated when her and Pearl's life in Shaker is disrupted. The two of them are ostracized and expelled by Mrs. Richardson for not following the 'rules'. After having taken two jobs in order to support her and her daughter's lifestyle and assure that they are seen as a part of the community. Mia is crushed by Mrs. Richardson, who control over their circumstances and deriving happiness from order. Despite the fact that Mia and Pearl are successful, for a while at least, in integrating into the community, they have maintained their eccentricities and values which are influenced by the values and behaviour of other community members.

Ng also contrasts the picture perfect life of the Richardson's with Mia's transient life. Ng compares Mia with Robinson Crusoe in Daniel Defoe's pathetic

novel, *Robinson Crusoe*, because of her transient life and quest for searching an identity in the hurry burry world as an artist and also a mother. Ng makes the readers clear that Mia has a quest to exist in the world even though she is in pathetic circumstances because she knows that, life is more precious. Ng's idea on 'existentialism' breaks the norms of order and commitment in human life. Moody is the Richardson's third son, who greatly admired the transient life of the Warren's and considers it like a magic trick to live. Ng highlights:

Watching the Warrens live was like watching a magic trick, as miraculous as transforming an empty soda can into a silver pitcher, or pulling a steaming pie from a silk top hat. No, he thought: it was like watching Robinson Crusoe conjure up a living out of nothingness. (33)

The origins of her family life, reveal the reasoning and motivation behind much of Mia's character in the present narrative. Her parents have believed in the role of order, just like the Richardsons, and reluctant to accept Mia's disruption of that order or her burgeoning identity as an artist. Only her younger brother and her neighbour have behaved empathetically or altruistically toward her. They have advised Mia not to follow the family rules which restrict her dreams.

In her college days due to lack of money to pay fees, Mia is ready to act as a surrogate mother who has not openly accepted in their orderly family. She hides this fact from her parents because she knows that they wouldn't accept the hidden reason behind her action. After her brother's death, Mia reveals the truth to her parents and they have berated her for selling her own child. Mia tries to prove her cruel situation and her good intention to help the Ryans but her orderly parents are not ready to accept all these reasons. Her parent's words deeply wound her heart, so she drops her

plan to act as a surrogate mother. Instead of handing over the child to the Ryans, Mia is ready to grow up the child as her own.

Mia's influence as 'mother' is the central inspiration to Bebe Chow's decision to fight the McCullough family for custody of her daughter. Bebe's claim to her daughter and the McCullough adaptation process, have raised a question to the Shaker Heights community about their rules and regulation in the proper process of transracial adaptation. It also raises the questions, what makes a parent? and whether the community is really as stable and orderly as it seems to be? Mia also influences Izzy Richardson's decision to burn down the Richardson family's house. Izzy, who is inspired by Mia's comfort with disorder and endorsement of pranks, burns down the house after taking Mia's metaphor about starting her life over like soil after a prairie fire literally.

At the end of the novel, the characters who have the need for order have found themselves plunged into chaos, such as the McCulloughs and Mrs. Richardson. While others, such as Izzy and Bebe, have cemented their status as disruptors. Lexie, Pearl, and Mia have found a way to live with the give and take nature of order and disruption, and have paved a path for them. They also make sense for them not to follow the order of Shaker Heights and allow them to remain in control of their lives and circumstances.

In the fourth chapter, the 'coming of age' of the young characters is discussed. It also elaborates the contrasting life of the young characters and the teenage life of their parents. It portrays the age gap between the children and their parents which creates the central chaos in the novel *Little Fires Everywhere*.

Chapter Four

The Journey from Innocence to Maturity

Every adolescent or young adult is maturing, but each may take a different road and go at different speed on his or her journey from childhood to adulthood. One of the common themes of Young Adult literature is coming of age. Terminologically, ‘the coming of age’ usually means reaching full legal adult status. Therefore, Bucher and Hinton, authors of *Young Adult Literature: Exploration, Evaluation and Appreciation* (2010), further observe that the moment of coming of age usually occurs in twelve and nineteen-years-old. In this case, adolescents try to reach full legal adult status variously, between cultures, especially in relation to cultural markers as alcohol, sexual consent, driving license and marriage.

The transition from childhood to adulthood is not an easy one. Not only does the body go through awkward and uncomfortable changes but the whole outlook on the world and identity go through a series of ripples. The psychoanalyst Erik Erikson is noted for his work in the psychosocial development of humans, and his research breaks down human development into eight stages. Erikson coins his fifth stage of development as the “Identity vs. Role Confusion” level. This period occurs during adolescence, from the age 12 to 18. These years are marked by the adolescents who search for their personal identity like, where do I belong? Who am I? What should I believe in? It is the period when the child slowly transforms to an adult. The Coming of age concept is famous in stories of film and literature.

The story of coming of age generally features a young character, especially to a teenager, who gets confronted by a mature conflict. This youth feels alienated, and believes that no one understands him. These disengaged teens might feel detached

from their home or school life and through this obstacle, they have a quest for self-discovery. The coming of age novels revolve around the themes of outsiders with mature situations and how they end up discovering who exactly they are.

The Young Adult fictions commonly dramatize situations and events that bear upon the child's initiation into new domains of psychosocial experience. It also talks about the adolescents and post adolescents encounters with the pleasures and perils of modern life, thereby taking up the motif of identity formation that is typically associated with twentieth-century literary fiction, autobiography and stage drama. A further argument is that the genre of young Adult fiction reflects the culturally and aesthetically eclectic character of the contemporary world.

The teenagers have been greatly influenced and affected by their surroundings, like family, peers, and also their favourite adult fictions. A coming of age novel has devoted entirely to the crisis of late adolescence involving courtship, sexual initiation, separation from parents and choice of vocation or spouse. One of the great modern examples is H. G. Wells' *Ann Veronica* (1909), which opens with the eponymous heroine at the age of 21 who is about to run away from her father's home to explore life for herself. Celeste Ng's second novel *Little Fires Everywhere* comes under Young Adult fiction and the novel focuses on the coming of age of the young character.

There are five main teenage characters in *Little Fires Everywhere*. This novel presents sexual relationships, unplanned pregnancy, and abortion as part of the lives of the teens but the novel is mainly about two adult women and the choices they make for themselves and their families. Celeste Ng presents the lives of Elena Richardson and Mia Warren in a way that asks readers to see each life as a commentary on the

other. Ng wraps the novel with mysterious questions like Who is right? Is it better to have a plan for life and to follow it without deviation or is it better to take chances, to be impulsive and to see where choices lead? Are there times when rules do not work? Are our actions or choices in life ever truly black and white? There are no easy answers. The questions even raise chaos among the characters, and they are struggling to follow the rules or break down them. It may be that Ng would not say one way is better than the other, there are just different ways of living and there are complex reasons why people do the things they do. Ng clearly evaluates how the idealism of the mothers about life affects the teenagers and restricts their lives.

This chapter discusses the famous themes in coming of age's *Little Fires Everywhere*. Ng wraps the novel with the psychological loss of innocence of the young characters and their confrontation with the adult world. It also points out the moral challenges, individual needs and desires vs. external pressures, expectations and social norms. The novel also portrays the failure of dreams, disappointment in friendship and limitations of the young characters. Finally, the novel ends with the acceptance of the complexities, the greyness of the world and awareness of the self.

According to Erikson the main task of early adulthood is to establish intimate relationships and not feel isolated from others. Intimacy does not necessarily involve romance but it involves caring and sharing one's self without losing one's self. Ng depicts the character of Pearl with these qualities. As a teenager Pearl, feels more isolated because she is sick of being dragged from town to town, and has implored her mother to promise her that Shaker Heights will be the place where they finally settle down. Pearl immediately becomes intertwined in the lives of the Richardson family, at first through her friendship with the shy, love-struck Moody and later through her co-dependent friendship with Lexie and her sexual relationship with Trip. Mia is very

much happy about the growing relationship between Pearl and the Richardson's children, which helps Pearl to come out of her isolation.

Lexie and Pearl become closer after Moody brings Pearl into the Richardson home, and soon Lexie is dependent on Pearl for guidance. Lexie influences a lot in Pearl's life. She offers Pearl some of her old dresses, which makes Pearl to feel like one among the Richardsons. Pearl writes Lexie's college application along with the essay of her vision and accompanies her to a women's clinic when Lexie becomes pregnant and decides to have an abortion. Lexie uses Pearl's name as her own at the clinic, unknowingly setting up a dangerous and devastating time bomb which will impact her own family and Pearl's. Unfortunately Mrs. Richardson, combing through the clinic's records for research in the Chow and McCullough case, discovers Pearl's name in the appointment records.

Erikson points out that many of the developmental tasks of early adulthood involve becoming part of the adult world and gaining independence. Young adults sometimes complain that they are not treated with respect, especially if they are put in positions of authority over older workers. Consequently, young adults may emphasize their age to gain credibility from those who are even slightly younger. The youngest and most rebellious of the Richardson children, Izzy is desperate for escape from her heavily regulated life. Izzy was born prematurely and as a result, over-parented by her mother Mrs. Richardson. Ng illustrates:

Mr. Richardson was more tolerant of Izzy. It had been Mrs. Richardson who had held her, Mrs. Richardson who has heard all the doctors' progress, the dire warnings about what might be in store for her. . . Mrs. Richardson could not let Izzy be, and the feeling

coalesced in all of them: Izzy pushing, her mother restraining, and after a time no one could remember how the dynamic had started, only that it existed always. (128)

When Izzy becomes eleven years old her mother has admits her in a dance class because she considers Izzy as a clumsy child. Mrs. Richardson believes that dance class will regulate her actions. Izzy is not interested in the dance class but her father Mr. Richardson advises her to try it once before quitting. Each and every day in the dance class Izzy has sat down in the floor and refused to move. For the recital Izzy has written “NOT YOUR PUPPET” (47) in her forehead and struck on the stage.

Mia Warren has taught Izzy, how to use her voice and her action to ‘do something’ to change her circumstances. Izzy, has drawn to Mia because of her freedom, artistry, and sensitivity. Mia and Izzy begin spending most of their afternoons together. They are working in the rental house. Mia teaches Izzy several lessons about agency, change, and renewal, prodding her to ‘do something’ to change the things in her life with which she is unhappy. Mia warns her that, like ground razed by fire, sometimes everything must be burnt to the ground to make way for the ‘growth’ of new ideas. Izzy takes Mia’s advice as fuel for school pranks, for challenging her parents and setting a fire to her family’s home. Izzy represents disruption and ostracism, and her relationship with her own mother represents the controversial relationship between a teenage daughter and her mother which is of the theme of the novel.

Erikson illustrates that, the focus of early adulthood is often on the future. Many aspects of life are on hold while people go to school, go to work and prepare for a brighter future. They believe that, working so hard will result in a better future. The

eldest of the Richardson children Lexie who resembles her mother, is a smart and sensitive girl who dreams alternately of escaping to Yale for her higher studies and remaining in Shaker Heights to raise a family. Lexie feels sad when her boyfriend Brian is applying to Princeton, while Lexie has her heart set on Yale. Moody always advises Pearl to be smarter because his sister, Lexie always does her works perfectly. Ng encomiums on Lexie;

Despite her air of frivolity, she was near the top of her class . . . She was taking four AP classes and served as secretary of the French Club . . . she can finish her homework in half an hour before bed. . . “Lexie’s got a good brain. She just doesn’t always use it in real life.” Yale seemed a stretch but a distinctly possible one, her guidance counselor had said. (61)

Lexie likes orders even though she has some restrictions to follow the rules. She loves her boyfriend even though he is a black American. Most of the people in Shaker Heights divide people with their race but Lexie dislikes this partition, and she bends herself from these kinds of racial rules. Lexie is deemed as a ‘baby crazy’ by her brother Trip and boyfriend Brian and her obsession with babies is brought on when she meets May Ling Chow. Though Lexie becomes pregnant, she could not like to carry a baby at her teenage. Lexie has undergone a great disappointment and without any guilt, she aborts the fetus while considering the betterment of her future life. At the end of the novel, Lexie also, breaks up with her boyfriend Brian.

Brian is an African American in Shaker Heights residence and fellow senior at Lexie’s school. Like Lexie, he also has some high dreams in his life. He has his heart set on Princeton. Lexie and Brian have sex for the first time on Halloween, and after

that, often sneak off to sleep together. When Lexie becomes pregnant, she fantasizes aloud to Brian about her dreams of having a baby with him, but Brian hates this idea and ill treats Lexie, telling her she's 'crazy' and that he does not want to be 'that guy'. Brian tries to convey the racial limitation of the society to Lexie who fantasises to have mixed race babies with Brain.

I do. Maybe. Lex, we're eighteen. You know what people would say? Everybody would say, oh look, another black kid, knocked a girl up before he even graduated from high school. More teen parents. Probably going to drop out now. That's what everybody would say . . . No way am I going to be that guy. No. Way. (201-202)

Erikson argues that in twenties, intimacy needs may be met in friendships rather than with partners. This is especially true in the United States today as many young adults postpone making long term commitments to partners either in marriage or in cohabitation. The Richardson's second son, Trip is a junior in high school and an athlete who is roguish, good-looking and quickly becomes the object of Pearl's affections. Though at first it seems as if Trip could just be using Pearl but he develops real romantic feelings for her and reveals himself to be more sensitive than he first appears. He and Pearl embark on a sexual relationship, often sneaking off to Trip's friend Tim's basement.

Trip got bored easily, and seldom thought about girls once they were out of his sight. But he had never encountered a girl like Pearl before, who wasn't embarrassed to be smart, who didn't quite fit into the orderly world of Shaker Heights, whether she knew it or not. (315-316)

Moody is the first of the Richardson children to befriend Pearl. He has a crush on Pearl from the moment that they meet. He is a creative, romantic type of personality who develops romantic feelings for Pearl. To raise his own stock with her, Moody attempts to show her the ways in which his family can be false and manipulative in order. He is so furious after he sees her holding hands with Trip. This incident disappoints Moody a lot and he never speaks to her again, blaming her for being attracted to his brother but not to him. Youngsters always have this possessiveness within them, when it comes to friendship and love affairs. Moody is a spirited young man who wants to experience everything that his older siblings have done. He then grows embittered and even cruel when he discovers Pearl's relationship with his brother Trip. He throws Trip under trouble when his mother questions him about Pearl's believed pregnancy, and he tells her that she is talking to the wrong son. Ng indicates the frustrated answers of Moody and says;

“I know,” Mrs. Richardson said. “About Pearl. About the baby.” The shock on Moody's face, his stunned silence, told her everything. He hadn't known, she realized. . . Moody slowly, coldly, pulled his hand away. “I think you have the wrong son,” he said . . . “There's nothing between Pearl and me. It wasn't mine.” He laughed, a tight, bitter cough. “Why don't you go ask Trip? He's the one screwing her.”
(345)

In 1978, Daniel Levinson published a book entitled, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* in which he presented a theory of development in adulthood. According to Levinson, young adults have an image of the future that motivates them. This image is called 'the dream' and young adults experience. Futures are a dream to youngsters. They always fantasize how their career paths would progress and where they would

be at midlife. Dreams are very motivating. In *Little Fires Everywhere*, Ng portrays how the young characters have the quest to attain their dream. The mothers have higher dreams than their children. Mia and Mrs. Richardson are packed with such dreams and they have their will-power to attain them in the future. Mia wants to become a successful photographer and Mrs. Richardson wants to become a well-known Journalist.

Mia Warren is a single mother and a struggling artist who finds herself at the center of a strange and tight-knit community, the manicured and utopic Shaker Heights, Ohio. She has inspired by Hester Prynne, is a single mother in *The Scarlet Letter's*. Mia is more empathetic, intuitive, and secretive. Mia avoids her shadowed past by focusing intensely on her art of Photography. In the progress of the novel, the narrative jumps backward in time to the fall of 1980. Mia has enrolled as a freshman at the New York School of Fine Arts, when she was just eighteen. She has keen observational skills and sensitivity to things around her, since her childhood, and so her parents neither thrilled nor surprised that she has chosen to pursue photography.

Mia has always believed in the power of transformation. Her brother, Warren, only a year younger than her, is the only one who understood the way she saw the world. As a shy kid, Mia discovered photography as a hobby in her twelfth birthday, and her brother Warren discovered sports. She purchased a camera from a junk shop in town, and began to take odd photos of dilapidated houses and animal corpses. Her parents have considered it as “waste of money” (218) but one of the Wright family’s elderly neighbour has told her she had a ‘good eye’ and lent her a Nikon camera. Mia continued to work hard at photography, save money, and eventually bought an even better camera. Mia’s parents are reluctant to accept Mia’s disruption of that order or her burgeoning identity as an artist because they just branded women as a homemade

product. Her brother and neighbour encourage her to follow her passion not the rules of the cultures. Ng expresses Mia's strong emotions thus;

For Mia, however, the photographs were only a vague approximation of what she wanted to express, and she soon found herself not only altering the prints—with everything from ballpoint pen to splashes of laundry detergent— but experimenting with the camera itself, bending its limited range to her desires. (217)

During her final year, Mia receives a letter saying that her scholarship will not be renewed for the coming school year due to budget cuts. To pursue her dream, Mia is ready to accept the demand by Mr. Ryan to act as a surrogate mother. Her dreams have driven Mia to New York, as well as the same dreams make her a surrogate and single mother in her future.

Levinson also interviewed women from the age of 35 to 45 and published another book, *The Seasons of a woman's life* after twenty years of research. There he reports the 'split dream' of women. It illustrates women's image of the future in both work and family life. Levinson argues that traditionally, men are taking care of their families by working outside the home. However, for women, working outside the home and taking care of their families are perceived as separate and competing for their time and attention. Ng frames the character sketches of Mrs. Richardson with this 'split dream'. As a single mother, Mia never has this 'split dream'.

It is clear that Mrs. Richardson has 'split dream'. She wants to become a journalist, as well as to bring up her children with the order of her community. One day Izzy points out her job as a journalist which arouses pride to Mrs. Richardson. Then Ng narrates about the childhood days of Mrs. Richardson;

Izzy's words—*You're a reporter*—had touched her mother's pride like a finger pressed into an old bruise. Mrs. Richardson had wanted to be a journalist her entire life, long before the aptitude tests their guidance counselor had administered in high school. "Journalists," she explained in a civics speech about dream careers. . . . Journalism, to Mrs. Richardson, seemed such a noble calling, one where you could do good from within the system, and in her mind she envisioned a mix of Nellie Bly and Lois Lane. (115)

During her high school days, in the aptitude tests class the students guidance counsellor, asked the students to share their dream career. Mrs. Richardson, as a young girl, expresses her fiery passion to become a journalist. Young Elena portrays that the journalists reveal truths and information that the public deserves to know and they provide a record for posterity for the future generations to learn from the mistakes. One day in the history class Elena comes across the word '*noblesse oblige*' which means noble calling. She considers journalism as a noble calling and fantasizes herself as a journalist. Elena's mother always engages herself in some social works and brings her young daughter along with her. She always emphasises that "Change doesn't just happen . . . It has to be planned" (115), the motto of the Shaker Heights community. These enthusiastic words are firmly rooted in the young mind of Elena.

To pursue her dream Elena has joined Oberlin. There she meets Bill Richardson. The narrator notes "Billy Richardson, tall and handsome in the Clark Kent vein" (116). They have planned their future life, with careful orders. After their graduation, they get married and settle in Shaker Heights. Bill Richardson has started a law school and Elena Richardson has joined in a local newspaper *Sun Press*. Mrs. Richardson is quite satisfied with her job and does not want to travel beyond Shaker

Heights because she wants to raise her children in Shaker Heights with its orders. Here the readers have understood that there is a 'split dream' in Mrs. Richardson's life. Ng also points out that Lexie also has the same mentality about her future.

The experiences of the mothers show that they have a high hope to achieve their dream. In contrast, the young characters just seek pleasure in their life through parties, sexual relationship and TV shows. Ng criticizes the 90s kids for drowning in the worldly pleasure and their eagerness to continue the same. They lack the fiery passion about their future lives because of the worldly diversions. The final chapter sums-up the previous chapters and highlights the root cause of the 'Little Fire', everywhere in the community.

Chapter Five

Summation

American Literature refers to the literary works shaped in the history of the United States and its former colonies. America was once under the rule of Britain as part of the latter's colonies therefore its literary institution is associated with the expansive tradition of English Literature. American Literature is heavily influenced by English Literature because of the British Colonialism. Its tradition thus began as part of the broader tradition of English Literature. American literature began with the first English colonies in Virginia and New England. These colonists brought with them the literary wealth of their countries. Most of these Americans were the English migrants who began writing in the 16th century.

The first chapter, Introduction throws light on Celeste Ng's life, works and achievement in American literature which proves Ng as the budding American author. Celeste Ng has written only two novels, yet she deserves her own place in American Literature. She is one of the budding writers in contemporary American Literature. In 2018, "Entertainment Weekly" proclaimed Celeste Ng as 'the novelist of the moment'. Ng taught writing at the University of Michigan, and she also taught at Grub Street in Boston. Ng also was an editor of blogs at the website Fiction Writers Review for three years. Celeste Ng, author of the 2014 novel *Everything I Told You* and the 2017 novel *Little Fire Everywhere*, both of her novels are New York Times bestsellers and recipients of multiple awards. Ng has been named the 2018 Ambassador for Independent Book Store Day.

Celeste Ng's, bestselling novel *Little Fires Everywhere*, is packed with idiosyncratic characters whose decisions have drastic effects on each other's lives. The

novel has been written in close third-person narrative. Ng's transition from one character's perspective into another shows the symphony of the same events and its alteration through different minds. Entertainment Weekly gives a great contribution to Ng and her novels. The article portrays that Ng widens her aperture to include a deeper, more diverse cast of characters.

When Ng first began *Little Fires Everywhere*, she wished to write about her beloved hometown of Shaker Heights, Ohio. She has started with a story about troubled families, the wealthy Richardsons and their complicated family dynamics, the mysterious Mia and her daughter, and the secrets they all carry with them and set the story in her hometown. Ng needs some shadowy places where mysteries could lurk, where secrets could stay hidden and pasts could be shed. Ng sets the novel in the 90s to create the mysterious background where there is no interconnection between people of the world through social media.

The second chapter, Ethical Motherhood exemplifies the moral qualities of motherhood in American societies. The very interesting thing in this novel is the differences in the nature of the mothers represented by Mia Warren and Elena Richardson. Mia Warren is a friendly mother who understands the circumstances of her teenage daughter, Pearl. "My mom is always nice," Pearl said, with a prickle of pride. Mia is a type of mother who is very friendly, wise, and very understanding for the growth of her child. It is clear from a sentence that comes from Mia's mind:

To a parent, your child wasn't just a person: your child was a place, a kind of Narnia, a vast eternal place where the present you were living

and the past you remembered and the future you longed for all existed at once (139).

Mia also comforts and warms Richardson's sons and daughters. They feel that finally they find a safe place to tell everything, especially Izzy. She likes Mia's motherhood nature. Mia, is a causal mother who reflects freedom and independence in the novel *Little Fires Everywhere*.

The second one is Elena Richardson who has an enormous passion to applying the norms of Shaker Heights, so there are lots of orders in her life. She has an established life which is organized and considered perfect by others. She is a protective and paranoid mother to her sons and daughters, especially to her younger daughter, Izzy Richardson because she was born prematurely. Ng uses powerful sentences to illustrate the contradictory relationship between Izzy and Mrs. Richardson. Elena's maternal orders often give stress to her children. As a result they have started to hide their activities from their mother. Ng clarifies that it is not a good condition between a mother and her children to hide secrets. A mother must be able to take the role of a friend to moralise her children.

The third chapter Role of Order in Shaker Heights Communities have demonstrated the strict orders of the Shaker Heights community. Shaker Heights, Ohio, the real town in which *Little Fires Everywhere* takes place, is one of the very first planned communities in the United States. In the early 1900s, the planned community of Shaker Heights was created with a motto in mind: "Most communities just happen; the best are planned" (12). Planning, completely rules the world of *Little Fires Everywhere*. Celeste Ng describes, they need orders to avoid the unseemly and unpleasant actions. Though Ng's narration delivers this statement in a tongue-in-

cheek manner, many of the characters in *Little Fires Everywhere* sincerely believe it and clinging to an ideal of regulation and discipline that ultimately fails them.

Shaker Heights is governed by many unspoken rules and regulations. They are often strict and obscure. The community has never allowed the people to grow the grasses more than six inches tall. If people leave the lawn carelessly, then the city police will send a warning letter and collect fare money for the fine. Ng presents the different rules of the community in a matter of truth manner. At first, the Warrens struggle to follow the strict order of the city, and then they try to adopt it with a bitter taste.

Mrs. Richardson proudly introduces the customs of the suburb Shaker Heights with her new tenants Mia and Pearl. She praises the motto of the community. She points out that, how the community takes too much strain to improve the education system to produce more perfect citizens. Mrs. Richardson follows lots of orders. She likes perfection in everything. From morning to night, she has a timetable to manager her day. She restricts her children to keep a separate timetable to lead a perfect life. The Richardson children always have a timetable for everything. Mrs. Richardson orders her tenants to keep things perfectly and cleanly. She controls her tenants with perfection and low rental cast. Ng opines:

She had been brought to follow rules, to believe that the proper functioning of the world depended on her compliance, and follow them—and believe—she did. She had a plan, from girlhood on, and had followed it scrupulously: school, college, boyfriend, marriage, job, mortgage, children. (78)

From her childhood days, Mrs. Richardson starts her future planning to lead a perfect life. She is quite satisfied with her job as a journalist in a local newspaper and does not want to explore other cities to get a better job. She wants to raise her children in Shaker Heights with its perfect rules. Lexie reflects her mother's attitude and plans her future life with orders. Trip, always keeps a timetable to regulate his routines. Moody is a realist, though he is urged by his mother to follow the rules of the community. Izzy is the only Richardson child, who hates the picture perfect life of her mother and rebels if anyone tries to control her actions.

The Richardson children pretend as perfect ones, but each one has their own world, where they bend themselves to overcome the restrictions of the strict community. Shaker Heights follows typical racial rules. Lexie tries to break it from her mind because her boyfriend, Brian is a black American. Like her sister Lexie, Izzy also tries to break the chains of race in her school, which results in her suspension. Mrs. Richardson hates the secret affairs of the youngster, though her son, Trip continues to deflower his girlfriends.

Moody has been greatly inspired by the transient life of the Warren because he has explored people with perfection in the Shaker Heights community. Ng contrasts the character sketches of Mrs. Richardson with Mia Warren. Mia hates the rules of the community and builds her own rules for her artistic life. She teaches Pearl about the importance of human life rather than the rules of perfection. She trusts Pearl very much. Mrs. Richardson, without the knowledge of truth, accuses Pearl for Lexie's abortion and orders them to vacate the house. Even in that cruel situation, Mia believes in her daughter, Pearl and does not ask a single question to justify the truth for the hidden mysterious fault.

Finally, the order only creates chaos to the characters. Mia and Pearl once again left the house to see Pearl's grandparents. Though the Shaker Heights community has praised for its utopian ideologies yet it also represent dystopian ideologies. Izzy hates her family members for their injustice towards Mia and Pearl. It is the reason behind her lunatic action, the great fire. Izzy, the rebellious child takes her own long journey to find out Mia and Pearl. Mrs. Richardson has lost her precious gift and has left her rules to search her lovable, sensitive and lunatic daughter, Izzy. Ng criticises the order of the Shaker Heights community. She writes this novel to justify the impact of perfection in life and how it destroys the happiness of the family.

The fourth chapter, The Journey from Innocence to Maturity, has examined the coming of age of the young characters. The novel *Little Fires Everywhere* filled with young characters has analyzed these teenage problems. Coming of age is a period in human life, when humans lose their childish innocence and earn maturity to lead a perfect future. This age is filled with dreams, fantasies, and psychological challenges, physical and mental changes. The teenagers mostly influenced by the society to become a full man. Ng's characters, have tried hard to find out their identity as youngsters and often become the victims of social problems. Lexie, becomes pregnant at her teenage and aborts her child to pursue her dream career.

Pearl has lost her innocence when the other teenage girls in her class have started to mock at her social relationship. To show herself as a perfect teenage girl Pearl, befriends Trip and has a secret affair with him. Moody is the first one who develops a friendship with Pearl and often advises her to keep distance with his brother. Moody has a passiveness within him towards Pearl. When he confronts Pearl and Moody together and he has stopped to speak with Pearl.

Teenagers want independence from their parents, because they want to walk in the world with their own legs. Izzy has been portrayed as a rebellious child who needs independence from her mother. Izzy suffers a lot under her mother's strict rules as a child. Now she wants freedom to enjoy her teenage life. When her mother resists to letting her free, she starts to rebel her mother, which ends in a heart break up between the mother and daughter.

As the youngsters, Mia and Mrs. Richardson, carry high dreams within them. Mia wants to become a photographer from her childhood days. Her parents' restricts Mia about her passion. At this crucial moment, Mia breaks the rules of the family and bravely pursues her dream as a photographer. Mrs. Richardson has a 'split dream' in her life. She gives equal importance to other jobs and her children's life. She wants to become a journalist from her school days and pursue her journey with a perfect order and finally achieve it. She also wants to bring up her children with the order of the Shaker Heights community.

Though the Richardsons children pretend to cling to orders, they follow disorders unconsciously. The Jerry Springer show is their favourite show. The Ricardsons children have their own reasons to watch this show. Every day afternoon they sit together, to watch this show. The show gives some solutions to the marital affairs, illegal relationships and family problems. Each one has their own purpose to watch the show. The show represents disorder. Ng opines that though they like order, they have some secret pleasure to break the order. Izzy is always branded as a clumsy and lunatic child by her mother, but she hates this Jerry Springer show. Ng clarifies that, though Izzy looks clumsier, she has her own orders to lead a successful life.

Ng has drawn inspiration from her own life to write *Little Fires Everywhere* after growing up in the planned community of Shaker Heights, Ohio in United States. “It really shaped me into the person that I am, and I wanted to write a book that would unpack that”, Ng said in a separate interview with IndieWire. Her work is often based on things that puzzle her. In this novel Ng did not just want to look at what Shaker Heights meant to her own personal development but for its ideals qualities.

Little Fires Everywhere ends with a puzzling situation and no one knows what has happened to the transient mother, Mia and her daughter Pearl, the rebellious Izzy and Bebe Chow and her daughter May Ling. Finally Mrs. Richardson lost her lows of life to search her younger daughter Izzy. The novel ends with pathos:

For as long as it took, for forever if need be. . . . She would spend months, years, the rest of her life looking for her daughter, searching the face of every young woman she met for as long as it took, searching for a spark of familiarity in the faces of strangers. (388)

To Mrs. Richardson, order is the most precious thing in life, but her rebellious daughter proves the value of motherhood. Finally, Mrs. Richardson breaks her orders because of self realization. She realizes that the order has destroyed her family.

In the process of this research, the scholar has come across areas that could prove fruitful for further investigating. A study on American moral values in families may be undertaken. Research on the effects of race one of the interesting theme in this novel. The novel can be approached through existentialism theory. The novel can also be analyzed on the theme of migration studies and sociological studies in transience. The nothingness of the transient people also gives curiosity to the researchers. A thematic study based on order and cultural identity can also be researched. The novel

can also be analysed in the light of social criticism and an in-depth characterization in the major characters. The research also affords scope for further study.

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The Gendered and Commodified Female Body in Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Struggles of Women	14
Three	Unruly Polygyny	28
Four	The African Perspectives on Barrenness	43
Five	Summation	55
	Works Cited	

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **The Gendered and Commodified Female Body in Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Anusuya.G during the year 2019-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Associate Professor of English

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Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **The Gendered and Commodified Female Body in Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

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PREFACE

The project entitled **The Gendered and Commodified Female Body in Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*** deals with the struggles women face in their life in Baba Segi's house because of the societal pressures, slavery, poverty which leads them to accept polygamous life.

The First chapter **Introduction** throws light on the African literature in general, discusses the origin of African literature and gives a short biography of contemporary writers of Africa and the biography of Lola Shoneyin and his works.

The Second chapter entitled **Struggles of Women** analyses how the characters Iya Segi, Iya Tope, Iya Femi and Bolanle struggle in the heartless world of Baba Segi's polygamous house.

The Third chapter, **Unruly Polygyny** depicts the effect of polygyny in the lives of Four Wives of Baba Segi, who being aware of the struggles of polygyny still accept to live in the household.

The Fourth chapter entitled **The African Perspectives on Barrenness** throws light on how Barrenness becomes a weapon for the oppression and abuse of women in the African Society

The Final chapter, **Summation** sums up all the important aspect dealt in the preceding chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project

Chapter One

Introduction

Until recently, only Western Literature was recognised and studied for academic, moral, and intellectual upliftment while African Literature which was fairly new, had not been seen as a field for any serious contemplation and scholarship. African literature is the literature of or from Africa and includes oral literature or orature, in the term coined by Ugandan scholar, Pio Zirimu. African literature consists of traditional oral and written literature in Afro-Asiatic and African languages together with works written by Africans in European languages. There were even arguments in some quarters as to whether Africa had literature or orature since the bulk of what was seen as African Literature had its root in oral tradition. Traditional written literature, which is limited to a smaller geographic area than oral literature, is most characteristic of those sub-Saharan cultures that have participated in the cultures of the Mediterranean. In particular, there is written literature in both Hausa and Arabic, created by the scholars of what is now northern Nigeria and the Somali people have produced traditional written literature. There are also works written in Ge'ez and Amharic, two of the languages of Ethiopia, which is one among the different parts of Africa.

The relationship between oral and written traditions and in particular between oral and modern written literature is one of great complexity and not a matter of simple evolution. Modern African literature was born in the educational systems imposed by colonialism, with models drawn from Europe

rather than from existing African traditions. But the African oral traditions exercised their own influence on modern African literature. Oral traditions include storytelling, the riddle, the lyric, the proverb, the tale, heroic poetry, the epic. Oral and written storytelling traditions have had a parallel development and, in many ways, they have influenced each other.

The linkage between oral tradition and the written word is most obviously seen in pulp literature, the Onitsha market literature of Nigeria, the popular fiction of Accra, Ghana, the popular love and detective literature of Nairobi, the visualizing of the story in the complex comic strips sold in shops in Cape Town. But the linkage is also a crucial characteristic of more serious and more complex fiction. The Arabic, English, French, and Portuguese literary traditions along with Christianity and Islam and other effects of colonialism in Africa also had a dynamic impact on African literature,

The impact of Western imperialism was such that European history and literature were very strong forces used in cementing imperialism in the minds of the colonized nations, to the denigration of their history and Literature. This denigration was rooted in the Western universalist conceit which regarded it as superior to every thought and idea from the West, over those from all other races of the earth. To these universalists, only Western Literature was accepted as possessing universality in terms of truths, human experiences, and intellectual depth. African Literature which was viewed as an emanation from the underdeveloped world was therefore considered unworthy of any attention.

Negativism can be seen or located in the context of negative feelings or perceptions against normal human nature and cultural heritage of people different from one's peculiar group or race. History has been manipulated in some cases to promote this negative tendency and used to oppress other human groups to score the cheap political point of showing the false cultural superiority of one race over another. All about colonial and postcolonial literature is that they deal with Europe painting a poorly conceived picture of Africa to justify European slavery of African and African writing and writers trying to tell their own story or version of the European tales. African writers who sing a different tune from the Europeans are made objects of European colonialist criticism. As George Joseph notes in his chapter on African literature in *Understanding Contemporary Africa*:

Literature can also simply mean an artistic use of words for the sake of art alone. Traditionally, Africans do not radically separate art from teaching. Rather than write or sing for beauty in itself, African writers, taking their cue from oral literature, use beauty to help communicate important truths and information to society. Indeed, an object is considered beautiful because of the truths it reveals and the communities it helps to build. Whereas European views of literature often stressed a separation of art and content.

(303)

The Western universalistic concept was well captured by Said in *The Wretched of the Earth* and Fanon in *Orientalism* as parts of their literary

contributions to the decolonization of Africa. These books provided a rigorous method of analyzing the phenomenon of conquest, domination, and resistance in previously colonised societies thereby enhancing the decolonization process of both the African psyche and literature.

However, when a new educated breed of writers emerged in Africa, the imperialist literary trend started weakening down as a result of anti-colonialist writings in African Literature, exposing the imperialist fallacies about Africa and her people's cultures. As a reaction against this imperialist world and its attitude to the African, Achebe wrote *Things Fall Apart* in 1958 and explained the purpose for his work as follows:

A purpose implicit or expressed, to correct the distortion of West African cultures, to recreate the past in the present in order to educate the West African readers and give them the confidence in their cultural heritage which had been eroded by colonialism, and also in order to enlighten the foreign readers and help them get rid of the false impressions about the West African cultures acquired from centuries of cultural misrepresentation. (244)

Achebe is one of the ten most researched writers in the world. Achebe whose one singular novel, *Thing Fall Apart* has been translated into more than sixty languages in the world. Achebe who edited about two hundred African novels under the African Writers Series (AWS), apart from all his other novels, poetry, short stories, letters and essays, etc is generally acclaimed as the literary icon as well as the "Father" of African Literature, was denied the Nobel prize

because his works attacked colonialism in Africa. The genuine intention of Achebe is to present Africa's own side of the story.

In the wake of independence struggles, in the early nineteen, African writers were in the frontline of liberation efforts. Apart from the earlier works of Gustavus Vassa, Equiano's *Travels* and Sol.T. Plaatje Mudhi, other anti-colonial writings flowered, especially in West Africa to add fervour to the decolonisation efforts. The French-speaking West African writers became more vibrant in this struggle than their English speaking counterparts, perhaps owing to the assimilation policy of France in their African colonies. However, the struggle against imperialism led to the formation of the Negritude movement which was characterized by the following features, a rejection of white culture, a fresh and sympathetic look at the African culture, a cultural unity of all the black people, link with mother Africa and assertion of the African humanity.

The adoption of these features as an article of faith among African writers was later to culminate in the formation of the Black and Africa Festival of Art and Culture which brought all the black people together first in the Congo Democratic Republic and then in Lagos, Nigeria in 1977. This FESTAC as it became known, not only fostered unity among the blacks but also lent solidarity and common spirit to South African people still grappling with the Apartheid government. Furthermore, blacks in diasporas started looking inside Africa to discover and re-establish contact with their roots. These activities added potency to African unity.

Considering the above literary exploits of African writers and their effectiveness in dismantling imperialism in Africa, it is clear that Literature has been a potent tool in cultural liberation and globalization across the world. It is in tune with the role that Literature can play in opening up better literary and cultural understanding that Achebe feels that the cultural richness of mankind distributed by nature can be realized when he avers “Let every people bring their gift to the great Festival of the world’s cultural harvest and mankind will be the richer for the variety and distinctiveness of the offering.” (18). With liberation and increased literacy since most African nations gained their independence in the 1950s and 1960s, African literature has grown dramatically in quantity and in recognition with numerous African works appearing in Western academic curricula and on best of lists compiled since the end of the 20th century. African writers in this period wrote both in Western languages notably English, French, and Portuguese, and in traditional African languages such as Hausa.

Ali A. Mazrui and others mention seven conflicts as themes, the clash between Africa's past and present, between tradition and modernity, between indigenous and foreign, between individualism and community, between socialism and capitalism, between development and self-reliance, and between Africanity and humanity. Other themes in this period include social problems such as corruption, the economic disparities in newly independent countries, and the rights and roles of women. Female writers are today far better represented in published African literature than they were prior to independence. In 1986, Wole Soyinka became the first post-independence African writer to win the Nobel

Prize in literature. Previously, Algerian-born Albert Camus had been awarded the prize in 1957. Works written in European languages date primarily from the 20th century onward.

Dealing with a range of social and cultural issues, from women's rights and feminism to post-war and post-colonial identity, here are some of Africa's best contemporary writers. Chinua Achebe one of the world's most widely recognized and praised writers Chinua Achebe wrote some of the most extraordinary works of the 20th century. His most famous novel, *Things Fall Apart*, is a devastating depiction of the clash between traditional tribal values and the effects of colonial rule, as well as the tension between masculinity and femininity in highly patriarchal societies.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, born in Nigeria in 1977, is a Nigerian writer whose works range from novels to short stories to nonfiction. She was described in *The Times Literary Supplement* as "the most prominent" of a "procession of critically acclaimed young anglophone authors which is succeeding in attracting a new generation of readers to African literature", particularly in her second home, the United States. She is part of a new generation of African writers taking the literary world by storm. Ayi Kwei Armah's novels are known for their intense, powerful depictions of political devastation and social frustration in Armah's native Ghana told from the point of view of the individual. Nuruddin Farah Born in Somalia in 1945, has written numerous plays, novels, and short stories, all of which revolve around his experiences of his native country. Mariama Bâ, Aminatta Forna, Nadine

Gordimer, Alain Mabanckou, Ben Okri, Ngugi wa Thiong'o are also among Africa's best contemporary writers.

Lola Shoneyin born on 26 February 1974 in Ibadan, Nigeria, is a Nigerian poet and author. Shoneyin has forged a reputation as an adventurous, humorous, and outspoken poet often classed in the feminist mould. In April 2014 she was named on the Hay Festival's Africa39 list of 39 Sub-Saharan African writers aged under 40 with potential and talent to define trends in African literature. She lives in Lagos, Nigeria, where she runs the annual Aké Arts and Book Festival. In 2017, she was named African Literary Person of the Year by Brittle Paper.

Shoneyin's early writing consists mainly of poetry and short stories. Early examples of her work appeared in the *Post Express* in 1995, which features a short story about a Nigerian woman who leaves her husband for an Austrian woman. This story initiated a dialogue about homosexuality within a Nigerian context. Her first volume of poetry, *So All the Time I was Sitting on an Egg*, was published by Ovalonion House, Nigeria, in 1998. Shoneyin attended the renowned International Writing Program in Iowa, USA, in August 1999 and was also in that year a Distinguished Scholar at the University of St. Thomas, Minnesota. Her second volume of poetry, *Song of a Riverbird*, was published in Nigeria Ovalonion House in 2002. While living in England, she obtained a teaching degree from London Metropolitan University in 2005.

Shoneyin completed her first novel in 2000. Her second novel, *Harlot*, is a story of a young girl growing up in colonial Nigeria to make a fortune as a

Madame remains unpublished. Shoneyin moved on to her third novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, which was published in 2010. Cassava Republic Press, Nigeria, published Shoneyin's third poetry collection, *For the Love of Flight*, in February 2010. *Mayowa and the Masquerades*, a children's book, was also published by the Cassava Republic Press, in July 2010 which won the 2011 Atiku Abubakar Prize for Children's literature in Nigeria.

Shoneyin has also written for newspapers, including *The Scotsman*, *The Guardian*, and *The Times* on issues such as racism, Nigeria's tradition of polygamous marriage,¹ the Nigerian terrorist group Boko Haram and the elections of now President Muhammadu Buhari.

Shoneyin is an award-winning British Nigerian author and poet who was named Africa Literary Person of the Year in 2017. Her bestselling novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* was nominated for the Orange Prize for Fiction in 2011 and went on to win the PEN Oakland 2011, Josephine Miles Literary Award, and the 2011 Ken Saro-Wiwa Prose Prize. It is being adapted for Netflix by Mo Abudu as part of the streaming platform's commitment to original African content. It has also been adapted for the stage and was performed at the Arcola Theatre in London.

Shoneyin founded the largest book festival in Africa, Ake Festival. She is also the creative director of the new Kaduna Book and Arts Festival. Shoneyin also runs the publishing imprint and bookshop Ouida Books in Nigeria and she founded the Book Buzz Foundation, a charity that identifies and develops

innovative ways of promoting literacy and reading through the creation of reading spaces.

Lola Shoneyin's work explores womanhood, sexuality, and the intricacies of domestic life. Shoneyin is featured on the podcast *Unleashed, The Game Changers*, hosted by the women's rights activist and author Paola Diana. On the podcast, they discuss topics such as Black Lives Matter and the need for more female leaders, and issues around sexual abuse, gender discrimination, and the need for female role models. Each episode of the podcast features an inspirational champion of change, a successful person who has faced huge obstacles and changed their lives for the better.

Shoneyin's novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, narrates a family unit built on dishonesty and secrets, which kept the family together for a while. Although the novel relates a devastating secret in Baba Segi's polygamous house, the main focus is on the trials faced by Bolanle, Baba Segi's fourth wife, and how she carried herself through it all.

The novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* is used as a case study in response to similar situations faced by many African women in different societies, especially in the South African context. The novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* deals with the predicament faced by an African woman, dilemmas, challenges, and unbearable pains of women who are often blamed for infertility in marriage, without consideration of the fact that medical problems leading to infertility are non-discriminatory in nature. In this fascinating novel, Lola Shoneyin wrestles with several cultural pressures in marriage, which are

also prevalent among black women in South African communities. It argues that women's sexuality is viewed with a patriarchal prejudice, the referral of infertile woman as worthless, which in essence reveals the quality of their intersubjective relationship, depicts men as the agents and women as the objects in marriage and that the order of the African family unit is deeply constructed on gender lopsidedness. Lola Shoneyin, in an interview published in the website African Writing Online, says about her novel:

The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives is actually the third novel I've written in the last ten years. It's a classic case of third time luck. With my first novel, I didn't allow myself to have any real expectations because I suppose I was still finding my voice, but I was very disappointed when I couldn't sell *Harlot*, my second novel. After being roundly rejected by many UK publishers, I needed a new project, a fresh idea, so I decided to go with a story I'd wanted to write for many years. I started writing *The Secret Lives* in 2005 but I have had months on end when I was caught up in studying or work, therefore unable to give it the attention it deserved. Getting a publisher is just the beginning. After signing a book, the work goes into a queue and might not hit the shelves for another eighteen months to two years. Writing in the West, you learn to master the waiting game. Serpent's Tail is publishing my novel in the UK.

In her interview with Guardian Life magazine, award-winning author and organiser of Ake Books and Art Festival Lola Shoneyin, discussed the inspiration behind her debut novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*. According to Shoneyin, the major inspiration behind her critically acclaimed novel was a story she heard when she was only 14 years old. Her brother's girlfriend had told her about a story which, among other things, eventually encouraged her to tell a story. She told her about a particular situation, where a man had dragged his youngest wife, he was an Igbo man and he had three wives, to the hospital, complaining that she was barren and of course, as part of the medical investigation, he had to undergo a series of tests as did his wives and what they found out devastated the whole family.

Shoneyin also reflected her personal experiences in the book. Shoneyin's grandfathers were polygamous, so she always thought that it was very interesting how that played out in the lives of her parents, especially her mother, whose mother was the first wife and therefore just really unhappy about the notion of polygamy. she just wanted to write that story and look at how perceptions are changing as Nigerians, as Africans. How we view polygamy, for instance, vis-à-vis culture, modernity. Writing this novel was very important to her, especially the humanity and how a family deals with really serious, life-shattering challenges. The inspiration behind her book is just a snippet of all the interesting things she discussed in her interview with Guardian Life.

The novel begins with a problem and Baba Segi was worried about her fourth wife who did not conceive after some years from their marriage. So, he

searches for a solution to solve the problem of her infertility. The other three wives feel jealous of the fourth one named Bolanle, who is educated and well mannered and they make so many plans to chase her out of the house. The first wife is shown as a dominating figure in this novel. When Bolanle was finally taken to the hospital to find the reason for her infertility. The secret is finally broken down. Baba Segi finally comes to know the reason for her barrenness and discovers that he was sterile. He got affected by some illness when he was a young boy which made him sterile. Second chapter highlights the struggles and conflicts faced by the women in African household.

Chapter Two

Struggles of Women

In the intriguing novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, published in London, Serpent's Tail, 2010, Lola Shoneyin has tackled several widespread contemporary African cultural stresses, though her text is clearly located in urban Nigeria with a preponderance of Yoruba practices and presences overlaid by Muslim and Christian affiliations. Personal relationships, individual value systems and each character's ways of managing and negotiating her and sometimes his circumstances are much more central to the text. However, with a plot as complex as the one deployed here, one needs to keep one's wits about one as the secrets alluded to in the title gradually unfold or are suddenly exposed to the reader and to one or other of the characters.

Set in the ancient and complex city of Ibadan alongside Ayilara where both wisdom and promiscuity are on sale. Just like the city in which the story is set, there is a link to something as ancient as the city, Polygamy, the complexity of the story unlike the city which is as conspicuous as a soup stain on a bridal gown is also toned down by the simple language the author employs. As the novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* begins we learn that Baba Segi's most recent, youngest and single formally educated wife, Bolanle his fourth spouse, is causing him bellyaching worries through her failure to conceive. He is, after all, the father of seven children by his earlier marriages and since he is no slacker in his marital sexual obligations, something needs to be done to

address this wife's condition. Bolanle scoffs at traditional healers and remedies. So, Teacher, Baba Segi's celibate mentor, advises the troubled husband to take this modern, sceptical wife of his to the University Hospital for tests. This is the process that will in due course unleash a torrent of unforeseen consequences.

He sat at his desk, reached into a drawer and brought out the photograph Bolanle had pressed into his palm the day they met. As he thumbed away the film of dust on it, he thought how much her personality had changed, how she'd slowly lost her meekness and become full of quiet boldness, how discord had followed her into his home and made his other wives restless. (6)

At this he recalls that on the day they met, he thought to himself the gods have sent her to him. He had then asked her, "Now that you and your friend have finished university, are you going to marry a man who will look after you? When I find one," she replied." (6)

Despite having clearly flaunted "her lean face, her dark, plump lips and her eyes" and their deliberately "slow and comely" blinks (6) at Baba Segi, Bolanle is not merely the ruthless gold-digger that the preceding descriptions seem to imply. She is the mystery girl. The puzzle that fits all yet missing. A girl who tries to run away from life's questions yet finds herself in the middle of the greatest puzzle without knowing she is the answer to the unasked question. We see the beauty of education over illiteracy. We see the beauty of character over selfishness or virtues over vices. We see the need of parents understanding the

emotional needs of their children. Parents befriending their children and not being terrorists in the name of discipline.

Although we will learn some deeper reasons much later, she does make it clear, in her own voice, that she has made an honourable commitment “I chose this family to regain my life, to heal in anonymity,” she says, “and when you choose a family you stay with them”. Bolanle defies opposition and criticism from her friends who call Baba Segi “a polygamist ogre” and from her mother, who terms Baba Segi “an overfed orang-utan” (160), but, says Bolanle, she “looks at him in another light”, seeing “a large but kindly, generous soul” (17). We too, earlier can learn that Baba Segi is an affectionate father who “looks lovingly into the faces of the older children and pinches the cheeks of the younger ones”, making “each child feel special” (8) as he returns home from work. This fatherly side of him is rewarded by his indisputable position as reigning head of the household and his wives’ indulgence of somewhat crude sexual techniques.

Most of the story is told from Bolanle’s perspective, but the other three wives, Baba Segi himself and even his driver are all given one or two turns to tell their stories and convey their perspectives on the family dynamics in this household. The authorial tone is perhaps at times sardonic, but there is no doubt of her both incisive and compassionate understanding of the deep influences of power competition and class dynamics in the household sphere. When we first

encounter this phenomenon, it comes across as crude nastiness, jealous possessiveness and cruelly exclusionary practices on the part of the other wives.

The most powerful of the spouses is, predictably, Baba Segi's first wife, Iya Segi whose daughter Segi is the eldest of the household's children. Iya being the Yoruba term meaning "mother of". Segi's younger brother Akin is the only one of the children who shows occasional appreciation of Bolanle, the other children having clearly been primed to shun her. Iya Segi is a huge, and also hugely wealthy, woman who owns a string of shops, and is in charge of the distribution of household supplies to the wives for themselves and their children.

The middle wife, Iya Tope, would evidently have liked to be on friendly terms with Bolanle along with her three timid little daughters, but is forbidden to be so. She is herself a quiet, put-upon personality. Much the boldest and fiercest woman among the three, with her frequently mean and vicious conduct, is Iya Femi, Muslim by birth, but a converted Christian of an extremely self-righteous bent. Having previously been the favoured youngest and prettiest wife among the three older wives, she bears an especially intense resentment towards Bolanle. Bolanle is mocked, her books smeared with palm oil and her attempts to help the children with their homework or to teach the three illiterate wives to read and write are immediately thwarted. Iya Segi firmly believes that Bolanle "wants our husband to cast us aside as the illiterate ones", but also that "these educated types have thin skins" and that, if "poked with a stick, she will fly away and leave our home in peace" (52, 53). Things come to a crisis in the

morning when Baba Segi first takes the new wife to the hospital, Iya Segi declaring: “She will reveal our secret. She will bring woe” (55).

The first serious attempt to expel Bolanle is immediately hatched. Vile substances involving a rat’s corpse and fresh blood are planted around the house. The other wives primarily Iya Femi, whose plan it seems to be, and Iya Segi, claim to have discovered by good fortune that Bolanle was attempting to cast a fatal spell over Baba Segi’s life. But Bolanle’s calm logic disproves the false accusation.

At this point in the text, having captured our interest in the family politics and seemingly established a clear line between a “good” Bolanle on the one hand and the “bad” wives on other, Shoneyin begins to complicate matters somewhat by providing us with fuller information about all four wives’ histories and home backgrounds, incidentally giving us an overview of various lifestyles in this society. The mousy Iya Tope has a surprising tale to tell, for instance. Having grown up in a many-childed, dirt-poor peasant family, where she was always even then considered the “strange”, excessively quiet and slowest developing member of the household, it is she who is chosen as the “trade-off” with Baba Segi for her father’s inability to raise abundant crops for the wealthy man from the city. Iya Tope, as she will become later in her life, hears her father describing her as being as “strong as three donkeys” and telling Baba Segi that “What she loses in wit she makes up for in meticulousness” (81,82). Her own thoughts on hearing this are reported.

Even a child would have worked out why my father was extolling qualities that had previously vexed him. I was compensation for the failed crops. I was just like the tubers of cassava in the basket. Maybe something even less, something strange a tuber with eyes, a nose, arms and two legs. Without fanfare or elaborate farewells, I packed my bags. I didn't weep for my mother or my father, or even my siblings. (82)

So, she is packed off to be Baba Segi's second wife and to undergo Iya Segi's schooling as to what her place will be in the household. Iya Segi gives Iya Tope the most crucial marital advice several months after the marriage: "Get pregnant quickly or he will start to force-feed you bitter concoctions from medicine-men until your tummy rumbles in your sleep" (83) is her secret night-time caution. To this is added Baba Segi's own ugly warning: "If your father has sold me a rotten fruit, it will be returned to him" (84). At last, Iya Tope contrives a liaison with the local butcher, gaining not only by falling pregnant three times in quick succession, but by experiencing the erotic joys of gentler love-making than Baba Segi's crude manhandling and thumping sexual techniques. But she is under no illusion that this is true love, since she pays the butcher handsomely from her household allowance for each encounter. However, she becomes sexually besotted, until Iya Segi shames her for completely neglecting her little daughters and warns her to stop seeing the butcher, which she wisely does. For Iya Tope as she has become by the birth of her eldest daughter, has no desire to be sent back in disgrace to her impoverished family in the village.

Iya Segi begins her tale with the blunt statement: “I was an enormous child” (96). She soon adds to the information that she was not appealing to the opposite sex the point that her mother had brought her up to distrust males. Her own father had deserted her mother for a more attractive woman, so that her mother’s creed became “Only a foolish woman leans heavily on a man’s promises” (97). We are given unmistakable evidence that Iya Segi in her youth developed an intense passion for a flirtatious, heterosexually inclined woman who would have scorned her feelings had she known about them. Iya Segi compensated for her loneliness by “worshipping money” and accumulating large stores of it. Having declined due to an incurable illness, Iya Segi’s mother, also an enormous woman, suddenly developed an obsessive desire to get her daughter into marriage and motherhood before she died. She plotted with her best and equally obese friend, Baba Segi’s mother, to get their children married, confiscating all her daughter’s hoarded cash to make the marriage an attractive prospect for the young man, who had long ago left the village. Baba Segi’s business prospered and Iya Segi managed to produce two children, Segi and Akin. She did not mind, she says, when her husband Baba Segi brought home two other wives, later on, but when the fourth one arrives, she resolves “I will not let Bolanle turn my future upside down” (103).

The next secret revealed to the reader is the origin of Bolanle’s wounding that she had sought to heal by marrying into Baba Segi’s polygamous household and it is a terrible one. Not yet sixteen, the apple of her ambitious mother’s eye and the star performer of her class at school, Bolanle had one day on her way

home from school been caught in a terrible rain storm. She reminisces how at that point she had “stood beneath that same “*agbalumo*” tree not far from here. I was alive then. I was head girl of my secondary school, head of the school literary and debating society. I knew I was the daughter every parent wanted” (110). Then an old, ugly pattern inserts itself into her unblemished life. As she stands there, drenched and bedraggled, a gleaming car passes her by, stops and reverses. The wholly respectable-seeming driver persuades her to get into the car, offering to take her safely home, but instead drives her to his luxurious home, locks her in and violently rapes the virginal girl despite her tears, appeals and protestations, claiming of course that this was what she had wanted. She cannot bear to tell her mother and destroy her dreams for her “good” daughter because Bolanle’s younger sister is a rebel and a principled under-performer. No longer “pure” in her own mind, the youthful Bolanle starts an affair with the university student, son, and only child of their wealthy landlord and his wife, the neighbours of Bolanle’s family whose circumstances are modest, her father being a lowly school teacher who drinks his income away.

On the night that the hugely wealthy, drunken and promiscuous landlord is murdered by armed robbers and his home ransacked, Bolanle who had, as usual, sneaked over the fence from her own home learns how little she means to Segun, the neighbour’s son. He is embarrassed that she saw him weeping as they hid, witnessing his mother’s humiliation by the thieves, and shuns her afterwards. Segun had also unblinkingly arranged for her to have an abortion when she fell inconveniently pregnant. This hidden history begins to emerge

when Bolanle is questioned by the hospital doctor in order to establish whether she is barren.

Iya Femi, the most unpleasant of the three wives and the one who feels and behaves most viciously towards Bolanle, has a story that makes one see her ugly conduct in a somewhat softer light, even if her acts are terrible. She was, we find out, the treasured only child of a prosperous Muslim couple who had both died in an accident when she was about ten years old. Her uncle, who had lived with them and seemed to love her, used the opportunity to take over her parental home for himself and his girlfriend, packing the child off to be a slave, unpaid in the household of a wealthy older woman who insists on being addressed as “Grandma” to make clear that this servant girl is not one of her children. As she was driven away from her parental home by this woman, Iya Femi tells us, she “glared” back at her uncle and “licked her lips” (123) to indicate that she would seek vengeance for his betrayal.

In the years I have lived in Baba Segi’s house, I have never forgotten the evil my uncle did to me. Every day the children come home from school and talk about science and maths, my head is flooded with anger. They use words like “biology” and “geometry”, words I don’t understand. Words I would have understood if my uncle had sent me to school. If he’d remembered the kindness with which my parents dealt with him, he would have seen to it that I became a greater person than I am today. I would

have been rich and powerful, not a third wife in an illiterate man's home. My uncle deprived me of opportunities. Grandma did, too. Thieves – that's what they are! Filchers of fortune. I won't rest until they are punished. In the Bible, God said: "Vengeance is mine." If God can delight in vengeance, how much more a poor soul like me who has been misused by the world? I must have revenge. Only then will I accept that there was a reason for all my suffering. (133)

Here one begins to understand why Iya Femi in particular resents Bolanle's well-meaning attempts to assist with the children's homework and to teach her co-wives to read and write. After her fifteen years of slavery and drudgery in "Grandma's" home, her bitter vengefulness is unassuaged by the relative luxury and security she and her children enjoy in Baba Segi's home. Part of Iya Femi's revenge may have been achieved by her having children by "Grandma's" unusual son Tunde, a point she intends revealing to her cruelly exploitative former "employer" at a strategic, later time. Another act in Iya Femi's vengeful plan is achieved by her burning down her parents' former home, which after her parent death, became her somewhat impoverished uncle's home. Tunde's having driven her there and applauding her resolve but Bolanle is the new thorn in her flesh. Iya Femi had formerly been the "Queen" of the household "I couldn't even walk across the sitting room without Baba Segi salivating," she boasts, but then adds: "Everything changed the day the monkey Bolanle stepped into this house" (137). Her other acts of fury may have some

justification, or at least be understandable, but when she is shown whipping herself into a righteous fury against the unwitting fourth wife, the reader recognises her violent injustice. Even so, she declares in her own mind, “The Lord is going to use me to conquer my enemy. The mantle of justice has fallen on me. Ha! I am blessed” (139).

Bolanle, in the meantime has gone to visit her mother, who has been made unusually vulnerable by a stroke that Bolanle had not been told about, probably because their relationship had all but broken down. This happened when Bolanle, after completing the degree studies that her mother had paid for by superhuman efforts, had gone and married and entered into an illiterate, polygamous man’s household. Her mother reiterates her usual reproaches even during this visit, calling Bolanle “ruined! Damaged! Destroyed!” (148). It is at this point that Bolanle at last reveals to her mother how she had been raped and achieves a compunctious near apology from her remorseful mother. She explains that the “buffoon” Baba Segi had been prepared to take her as a wife without raising uncomfortable questions and that she had sought a sort of haven in which she could heal. Then Bolanle cooks her temporarily disabled mother a meal, which they eat out of the same bowl. As Bolanle returns to Baba Segi’s home she walks past a shack set up as a bar to which young men go to booze, enticing girls to join them. Even though Bolanle has not spotted her, Segi comes rushing out after her, begging her not to reveal to her father that she was in the shack with a youngster she is in love with. Because Bolanle undertakes to keep her dangerous secret, Segi suddenly begins confiding in the sympathetic Bolanle,

and to the disgust of her mother, Iya Segi, joins Bolanle in the latter's bedroom, where she cannot resist cleaning up a delicious chicken dish left as obligatory for Bolanle by her co-wife Iya Femi.

That night Segi falls violently, dangerously ill. The food had been poisoned in a plot by Iya Segi and Iya Femi finally to get rid of the detested Bolanle. Instead, it is Segi who lies on the floor in agony, her toes "flexing and contracting as if she was in the throes of an epileptic fit", her father on his knees beside her, imploring the unconscious girl to "Tell the gods you want to stay here with me" (159). Segi is taken to hospital, from where, after every intervention is attempted, she is eventually brought home, bald and physically ravaged, to see whether further recovery can take place at home.

At this time, the medical investigators of Bolanle's apparent barrenness have required Baba Segi to come in for a sperm test. Before they reveal the results to him, they ask him to bring one of his other wives to the hospital with him. Profoundly shaken by her daughter's condition, Iya Segi volunteers to be the one and, at the hospital, at last reveals to Baba Segi and the doctors what the reader by this time has guessed. The "father" of seven children is, in fact, sterile, having had a very serious case of mumps as an adolescent. The news shatters him. At home that evening, deeply drunk, he denounces his unfaithful wives and in the midst of the dreadful scene Segi releases her last breath. When a distraught Baba Segi discovers her body the next morning, he "must have believed no one could hear him" as he "let out consecutive howls so haunting

that the neighbours hurried to their gates” (235). After the quick Muslim funeral, Baba Segi summons his wives. He also tells them, “It is not every day that a man discovers his life is a mere shadow and that there is a gulf between what he believes and reality. Neither it is every day that a man finds that his children are not his own” (240). He tells them they are free to go.

At this point the bereaved and utterly chastened Iya Segi intervenes. “You talk of the *father* of our children. *Who* is the father of the children? Who was the father of the child who now rots below the ground?” (241) she asks him, insisting that it is he, Baba Segi, the man who has lovingly and generously brought up and supported these seven children who is their only real father. She begs Baba Segi to keep them and to allow the wives to stay, having acknowledged earlier that it was she who had instigated the plan for the other two wives to seek impregnation by other men as she had done. But this secret, she says, must be kept within the family. Baba Segi accepts this suggestion. For her part, Bolanle announces she will leave and resume life on her own. She remarks quietly to herself, “I will remember Baba Segi. I won’t miss him but I will remember him. Perhaps on some days,” she adds, “I will remember him with fondness having learnt many things from the years I spent under his roof” (244).

Thus, the author concludes with harrowing and sometimes poignant accounts of the numerous dark secrets of Baba Segi’s wives. We leave Shoneyin’s narrative as Bolanle declares her resolve to meet the challenges of

her new, post-marital life with hope, for she is back “in the land of the living” after her years of depression, “and the world is spread out before her like an egg cracked open” (245). Chapter three focuses on the ethnicity of polygamy and polygyny prevalent in African households

Chapter Three

Unruly Polygyny

What is most fascinating about the novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* is its rough and disruptive counter-life, like a wayward child who defies the dictates of Shoneyin, its author-parent. In author interviews, Shoneyin claims quite categorically that polygyny is morally offensive and ought to be eradicated. She declares that “husband sharing is ugly” in a Guardian author profile titled “Polygamy? No thanks.” She explains her position by narrating her family history, in which a hereditary chieftainship obliged the “modern marriage” of her grandparents to take a step backward into polygyny with her grandfather marrying four other women. The experience made Shoneyin’s own mother wary of plural marriage, against which she warned her daughter “Polygynous wives might be smiling on the outside, but inside they are sad and bitter.” Shoneyin’s parents, for whom the ethnicity of their children’s partners is not an issue, also cautioned her brothers against dating girls from polygynous homes since they have to be “devious” to survive. Shoneyin also suggests that “the sad truth is, polygamy constitutes a national embarrassment in any country that fantasises about progress and development. Polygamy devalues women and the only person who revels in it is the husband who gets to enjoy a variety.

In this novel one could understand that ploygamy in the life of Aloa family leads to many moral issues of being unfaithful, jealous, murderous. The wives run the family within a particular secret. As far as the major characters are concerned, the secret that Baba Segi is infertile, is a secret only from Bolanle,

the new and fourth wife, and Baba Segi himself. The “secret” is so well managed in the narrative that sharp readers can guess but have it finally confirmed only at the end of the novel. The “secret” becomes apparent soon after Baba Segi’s marriage to his enterprising and entrepreneurial first wife, Iya Segi, who does not conceive a child even after being taken to a medicine man by Baba Segi on the recommendation of his advisor, the unmarried shebeen owner, Teacher. Iya Segi duly informs the second and third wives, Iya Tope and Iya Femi, about the secret, but she does not tell the fourth wife, Bolanle. Bolanle enters the Alao household with some hatredness and anger from the existing wives since she is “a graduate” young, beautiful, and sophisticated whom the other wives assume will steal Baba Segi’s favour. The polygamous life leads the wives to develop toxic thought among them except the second wife Iya Tope. The first wife, Iya Segi, goes so far as to say that, with the exception of Bolanle, she does not “blame the other women” since they are “weakened” by the prosperity Baba Segi offers. For her the other wives are the “humble maidservants who live for a kind pat on the head from the mother-of-the-home” (104)

Shoneyin portrays the first wife as a competitive, acquisitive, and lustful masculine character who manipulates her husband and the other wives to her own advantage. After marriage, Iya Segi continues to develop the keen business sense she had as a young single woman, having wheedled Baba Segi into allowing her to trade in sweets. Sweet wholesaling, however, appears to be a hidden purpose for a massive cement-selling venture, which also necessitates

that Iya Segi learns to drive a car. Both the sale of building materials and driving are coded as masculine in the novel's society. In fact, reversing gender stereotypes more fundamentally, Iya Segi is the provider in the household since her significant wealth, acquired while still in the village, is secretly passed on from her mother to the mother of Ishola Alao, as Baba Segi is known before the birth of his first child. Her wealth while single was such that she, like a man, was in a position to buy land and build a house so sizeable that her objecting mother declares: "The village men will say you are ridiculing them, doing what they can't!" (97). As a closeted lesbian, Iya Segi's gaze is further coded as masculine both when she, together with the virile village carpenter, ogles a female tomato hawker and when she salivates over Bolanle's female friend who visits the household. Nevertheless, despite the jealousies and self-interested power play at work in the household, the first three wives at no point expose to danger the fundamental stability of the home, representing the only security they enjoy.

The novel begins with Bolanle's entry into the household and ends with her departure. Bolanle, with a formal Western education and a sophistication that the novel defines as modern, believes she can bring refinement to both the polygamist husband and the wives. When Baba Segi belches, Bolanle naively believes that she will "devote a few hours a night to teaching him good manners" (19). She also patronisingly takes on the duty of introducing the wives to the niceties of polite conversation. The novel, however, leaves considerable doubt around how one should read the character of Bolanle.

The story shifts between third person omniscient and first-person narration and presents the histories and points of view of all of the main characters. But the story starts and ends with Bolanle entering the household, and a significant eight of twenty-eight chapters give voice to Bolanle. She appears to be the central character, the one who shows the most development and the one with whom readers are led to sympathise. Yet the wicked, rambunctious humour with which the novel is charged tempts the reader to view even Bolanle's character ironically, though she is never caricatured the way the traditional characters are. Bolanle defies her authoritarian and controlling mother by eloping with Baba Segi. For Bolanle's mother, polygyny is the choice of uneducated bush-dwellers and educated gold-diggers, and Bolanle is neither of these.

Polygyny presents itself to her as a refuge through which she may escape her completely dysfunctional family and the secret of her rape and abortion. As a fifteen-year-old schoolgirl, she had been tricked into accepting a ride on a rainy day from a Mercedes-driving, branded polo-shirt wearing, predatory young man, part of Africa's small, new, transnational consumerist class. Playing on the idea of conception and childbirth, which is of deep literary and cultural significance in the context of the novel, Bolanle compares her violated self to a broken egg. When she finally reveals the rape to her mother in an attempt to justify her choice to enter a polygynous household, she says, "Mama, you were living with an empty shell. Everything was scraped out of me. I was inside out" (150). In this situation, the Alao household seems to provide Bolanle with the comfort she

needs to become whole. Baba Segi's home is a troubled place within which she chooses to escape and to heal, but it is less troubled than the world outside. Despite the fact that it is Bolanle who needs saving, as soon as she enters the polygynous household, she casts herself as a saviour. When she is first introduced to the family, her self-righteous comment that she "will not give up on them" and "will bring light" to their "darkness" invites ironic interpretation (22).

A further irony lies in the outcome in which Bolanle does bring light but not the Enlightenment worldview that she anticipates. Instead, she brings to light Baba Segi's infertility and the other wives' ambiguous betrayal of and loyalty toward the polygynous union when her own apparent barrenness is medically investigated. All of the other wives engage in extra-marital affairs not out of interest but because of their desire for children and the preservation of the polygynous household, which for them is the only haven in a hopeless world. Children are the indisputable *sine qua non* of Yoruba cultural existence in the novel. Without a child one's life has no reality and one is a ghost in the world of the living. The beginning of the novel artfully highlights the significance of children by describing Bolanle's first night in the home. During their family television viewing time a news report about serial killings of pregnant women viscerally affects the family members and Baba Segi actually throws up. Such is the horror of foeticide. At the end of the novel, the illness and death of the eldest daughter, Segi, is cast as a violently destructive event that challenges the natural order of parents dying before a child. Since the birth of children ensures the

survival of marriage, the wives take the initiative and stop at nothing to make sure they become pregnant. While rural polygyny allows the “open secret” of impregnation by a male relative in cases of the husband’s sterility, “nuclear” polygynous families in the city have no such recourse since they live independently outside the network of extended family relations.

Thus, in a secret and daring take on this traditional practice, all of the wives except Bolanle are made pregnant by lovers of their choice. Iya Segi chooses the chauffeur, Taju, to impregnate her. Iya Segi may have accumulated wealth in the village like a man, and she may desire women, but she is obliged to marry and be impregnated by a man in order to have children. Her wealth allows the marriage to Ishola Alao to take place and her ingenuity allows her to be impregnated: “My husband? Mama, women don’t need husbands.” I spoke her own words back to her. “You do. You need one to bear children. The world has no patience for spinsters. It spits them out.” “Is this all so I can bear children?” “It is every woman’s purpose to bear children. Do you want to become a ghost in the world of the living? That is not how I want to leave you in this world.” (101). Iya Segi needs to have a child to fill her place both in the narrower social and wider spiritual contexts. Iya segi felt that, only if she gives birth to a child, she is safe in the Aloa household through which she can make her initial investment in the form of secret dowry safe and also multiply the money which she earned from her nourishing cement business which she started by convincing her husband to allow her to trade. Sent to the Alao home to collect a parcel, Taju is “taken,” ironically since it is the symbolic seat of the patriarch’s domestic

power, in Baba Segi's armchair and is "ridden like a new saddle" by the wife, Iya Segi, whenever her need to conceive arises (223).

In contrast to the dominating, shrewd first wife, the second wife, Iya Tope, is the daughter of an indigent farmer given to Baba Segi to repay a debt. She is childlike, unattractive, simple-minded, and clearly unable to fend for herself either in the countryside or the city. She is quickly inducted into the household's "secret" by Iya Segi. But quite unexpectedly, unlike the more practical-minded first wife, Iya Tope takes a far more pleasurable view of the task of conceiving a child. Iya Tope takes up with a "meat seller" who sells his flesh both literally and figuratively. Iya Tope, by far exceeding the "brief" given by Iya Segi to get herself impregnated, visits the meat-seller weekly and becomes successful in her motive. Her illegal relationship ends only when Iya Segi warns her for taking risks that threaten the household. Iya Tope is also overcome with a feeling of guilt since her sex addiction leads her to neglect her children who have "bought her the easy life she lived" (87). Iya Segi condemns it as a problem only when Iya Tope's absent-mindedness and neglect to hide the track of Iya Segi, may expose her adultery and thus expose to danger the stability of the polygynous household.

The third wife, Iya Femi, proposes to Baba Segi in an effort to escape her life as a house-girl in a wealthy family. After the death of her parents, she had been sold by her uncle into domestic slavery. The wealthy family is presided over by an especially tyrannical and cruel matriarch referred to simply as "Grandma" who treats her with cruelty. Iya Femi gives her in the below-stairs to

the “hedonist” son, Tunde (136), Who says that he lives for worldly pleasures. Iya Femi marries Baba Segi to escape her daily humiliations but continues to enjoy the erotic pleasures of her liaison with Tunde in the mistaken belief that their relationship is cemented by mutual sexual attraction. Iya Femi dreams of double revenge, in which the Alao household is the launchpad. Her first act of vengeance is successful. She returns to her village, where she burns the home stolen from her by her uncle. Her second dream of revenge is to triumphantly return to the house in which she worked, with Tunde’s children brought up as Baba Segi’s in tow, for her final victory over Grandma. This ambition is foiled, however, when she discovers from a general photocopied farewell note Tunde left at his office that he has unceremoniously abandoned her for a job as a “US rep” after his mother’s death. In it he requests that acquaintances get in touch by email:

“I ask you: what is email? And what is a US rep? Ha! God! Is this your face? I could not stop the tears of anger that wet my face. I cried. So there is no Grandma to parade my sons in front of? Ha! Coward! She saw my triumph coming and decided to deny my victory!” (167).

Iya Femi is also polyandrous, in her long-standing extra-marital relationship, which reverses the well-known French convention of the long-time mistress.

Thus, a novel which purportedly shows the oppression of voiceless women under the patriarchal system of traditional polygyny portrays one wife

who is the Nigerian equivalent of the Victorian self-made man, who dreams of one day indulging her lesbian inclinations and eyes young women from the top of her multi-storey mansion. It presents a second wife who is a simple-minded but well-intentioned sex addict and a third wife who acts on her vaulting ambition herself and not by proxy. In the contemporary Nigerian context in which they find themselves, these avenues open up from the space of the polygynous household, which is secured only through procreation. Bearing children, rather than romantic love, has been the foundation of African cultural approaches to marriage. The corollary of this idea is not, however, that love does not exist, but rather that Love is not the major social rationale for marriage. Paradoxically, the wives of this formal polygynous household become informally polyandrous in order to protect the material and emotional well-being. They also make the rational choice to stay in the household even when they have the opportunity to leave at the end of the novel. Their decision is not motivated by, nor does it aspire to, any Yoruba cultural ideal or notion of Yoruba identity.

Moreover, *Secret Lives* presents the rural model of the polygynous household transferred into the city. Shoneyin's novel involves the modern trend changes and depicts the change in which men appeal to tradition to formalise adulterous relationships with women who are then married and kept in separate homes. Shoneyin's *Guardian* article implies that polygyny is a traditional institution with no place in the modern world that it inherently oppresses women that household rivalries, jealousies, and hierarchies are completely destructive of

wives and children. Apart from the peripheral upper-middle-class characters like the man who rapes Bolanle and the family of Segun, Bolanle's first true love, Iya Segi is the only character who prospers financially. All of the other characters endure lives of inescapable poverty that drive them to act in morally and culturally reprehensible ways in order to survive.

In fact, the dominant tone of the novel is of poverty and hardship, *Secret Lives* also tests the judgments of its author in other ways. In the first place, it destabilises the familiar dichotomy that underpins analyses of intimate relations in which polygyny is associated with the timeless and unchanging village and monogamy with the transforming modernity of the city. Two of the wives, Iya Tope and Iya Femi, come from monogamous Yoruba and Muslim families in the village, where religious sanction of polygyny is supposed to reinforce indigenous African customs but, in this case, does not. Iya Segi and the husband, Ishola Alao, come from single parent families headed by strong and successful village matriarchs. Traditional family relationships thus appear quite unproblematically to encompass monogamy and single parent families whose households sometimes suffer extreme poverty but seem generally settled, happy, and secure. In fact, Iya Femi's parents appear to be very much in love and inseparable even in their deaths, which occur when "a log slips from a lorry and crushes them on a road they travelled every day" (121). By contrast, modern city monogamies are fraught relationships that are sometimes *de facto* polygynous. Bolanle's parents are in a monogamous union where "for life" means not till they are parted by death, as is the case with Iya Femi's "traditional" parents, but

rather that the family is a prison for the emasculated as opposed to sterile or impotent father who escapes through drink and a prison for the two daughters who escape through doomed relationships.

The other marriage encountered in the city is that of the parents of Segun, Bolanle's first true love. Segun's father is the wealthy landlord of the large middle-class housing estate on which Bolanle's parents are tenants. Segun's father is a public philanderer whose informal polygyny his wife tacitly accepts for the sake of her material well-being and social position. On one of her secret visits to Segun's suite in the family's lavish mansion the same night the family is attacked by a gang of armed robbers. Segun confides his embarrassment of his nightclubbing father to Bolanle: "I could have been sitting there having a drink with my friends and we would all have seen my father walk in with a girl on each arm" (181). The novel also makes, through Bolanle, a somewhat contradictory case for romantic love as the sole foundation of the modern monogamous marriage that the author endorses. Bolanle, like an Austen heroine, is an avid reader of romance fiction, a genre which is growing apace in Africa with dedicated African romance imprints like the Nigerian Ankara Press and even bigger digital growth with romance fiction published online. Ironically, Bolanle pretends to go to bed early to read her Mills and Boons as a pretext to escape to her boyfriend's home on the night Segun's family is robbed and his father is killed. Bolanle's teenage love affair has all of the hallmarks of the classic romance fiction scenario, namely a young, attractive, intelligent heroine of aspirant social class and a desirable, wealthy, somewhat unattainable hero.

Bolanle's dreams of romance, however, are shattered when Segun, subject to the terrors and humiliations of the armed robbery, which the pair watch hidden in the en-suite bathroom roof, does not acknowledge Bolanle at all.

“I reached out my hand to him but he pretended not to see it. He wished I wasn't there. Not to save me from the terrible things I was seeing but because he was embarrassed that I, a common tenant, was witnessing such a personal family tragedy. It was at that moment that I realised that I meant very little to him. I might have been another dusty lintel. I thought perhaps I wasn't worthy of him. (184)

The relationship is finally brought to an end when Segun turns away from her as his father's funeral cortège passes. When Bolanle visits her parent home after her marriage to Baba Segi, a marriage that is roundly condemned by her aspirant mother in particular, Bolanle comes across her old Mills and Boons. As if to put paid to the idea of romance in the riven world in which she finds herself, Bolanle discovers that her rebellious sister, Lara, has drawn sardonic moustaches on all of the heroines. Later, when she is married to Baba Segi, Bolanle burns the copy of *The Long Honeymoon* that she comes across among her mementos, finally to get rid of dreams of love as figured by popular romance novels. Even though, in interviews, Shoneyin may paint a picture of the polygynous patriarch as a smug, self-interested hypocrite, Baba Segi is much more complex and open-ended. Yes, he is presented as unpleasant, offensive strange figure with gross naturalistic flourishes, but he is a devoted, loyal

husband and father, unlike the modern, educated, libertarian Tunde, who uses Iya Femi and then abandons her to follow his career in the US, or Segun, who similarly uses Bolanle. Indeed, Iya Femi, underlining the emotional and material securities of the home, perhaps expresses the sentiment of the other wives most forcefully when she says, “Not even God Himself could have made me leave Baba Segi’s house” (130).

In this novel one could read about the polygamous lives in which the women are shown to suffer. One could also make their minds wander along with the characters and realising the pains and cunningness when it comes to live in a polygamous family. And the wives are forced to live in the family even when they suffer in it. They use the polygamous family setting as a platform to escape poverty, slavery, harassments in their lives which thus pushed them to live in a polygamous household.

The final chapter of the novel is titled “Bolanle” since at this point in the narrative the central character achieves self-realisation. While earlier in the novel Bolanle is a broken egg, in the end she is whole, and the difficult world full of privation and challenge is “like an egg cracked open” (245). Yet one might read the image of the cracked egg as representing the possibilities that lie before her in the world, possibilities which demand the breaking of the shell. In this case, the broken shell is the troubled equilibrium of the Alao household. Bolanle’s arrival and the light of medical knowledge she brings into this dark household comes at the price of the death of the eldest daughter, Segi, whom her mother kills by accident she intended to poison Bolanle’s food to prevent the

exposure of the family's secret. Baba Segi, or the "father of Segi," loses his status as father with the death of the daughter. With the revelation of his infertility, he also loses the status of father of all the other children.

Throughout the novel, Baba Segi is a benevolent, crude and uncultured patriarch who, in fact, is soft-hearted and whose wives have free reign provided they meet his physical needs. Following the exposure of his infertility, Baba Segi gives his wives and their children the opportunity to leave. With the exception of Bolanle, who opts to return to her parent's house, they all stay, recognising that they would be lost in the merciless world outside of the household.

In the light of the contradictory modernity Bolanle brings, that in this case exposes Baba Segi's humiliating secret, the patriarch enforces a seclusion on the wives which is not part of African polygyny and male-female relations and strips them of the freedoms and indulgences they had hitherto enjoyed. An agreement was drawn up. They could stay if they promised to be the wives he wanted them to be. He promptly banned them from leaving the house without his permission. Iya Segi was instructed to close down all her shops and relinquish every kobo she had saved to him. Iya Femi was forbidden to wear make-up and there would be no more church. "God hears your heart no matter where you are, he'd said" (243). While the revelation of the secret results in the foreclosure of the lives of the other wives, it precipitates Bolanle's sudden and striking realisations that allows her to become emotionally whole.

Baba Segi turns to her with renewed care and respect since she is the only wife that has not betrayed him. Although she tells him that continuing the marriage would be meaningless since there is no hope of children, she regards the household and her sojourn in it as a dark night which paradoxically “shook her awake” (244). Her time in the house is a “dream of unspeakable self agellation” (244). She realizes, furthermore, that she was “in the midst of strangers, people from a different time in history, a different world” (244), which reinforces the tradition-modernity divide partly endorsed by the novel. The novel ultimately presents the polygynous household as a prison in which the wives are the “inmates” who are “going nowhere,” while Bolanle “rejoins her life’s path” (245). The novel’s ending thus reinforces the conventional assumptions and stereotypes of the oppression and stasis of the “traditional” institution of polygyny, while the dynamic energy of the body of the narrative portrays polygyny as the deliberate and intelligent response of women whom the globalised postcolony leaves with few other choices. Bolanle, in contrast, firm in her conviction of the civilizational superiority and progressiveness of monogamy, rejoins her life’s path that, by implication, will ultimately lead her to future fulfilment in an exclusive, idealised life relationship. Chapter four throws light on the African perspectives on infertility.

Chapter Four

The African Perspectives on Barrenness

In traditional African society, a woman was needed as a child-bearer and derived her social status and her indispensable value from this position. The prime responsibility of the woman to her husband is that of bearing children, especially a male heir. For Africans, every new born is an ancestor returned. This belief in reincarnating one's forebearers is seen in the principles underlying the naming of new born. Being barren herself, Okoye's experience of being childless taught her that motherhood is one of the most important aspects of a woman's life (62). African scholars like Kimathi, Waruta, and Kinothi, Mbiti sums up the African view of infertility. Kimathi says "If there is not yet a child in the marriage there is no guarantee that the marriage will endure." (24)

Marriage and childbearing are regarded as a unit, thus applying pressure on the barren couple. Barrenness is not only unacceptable but also a disgrace and abnormal state. Because children are a glory to the family, barrenness is regarded as a curse and avoided at all costs, resorting to divorce or polygamy. The fact that it is the woman who becomes pregnant and carries the baby for nine months before giving birth easily leads people to believe that it is the woman who is responsible for fertility. The reality is that, without a sexual relationship between a man and a woman, no conception can take place. This is easily forgotten by some African traditionalists when trying to promote patriarchy at the expense of women. It is common within traditional African

settings that the inability to make babies in a marriage is often blamed on the woman, as such the society exhibits some kind of bias against women which leads to a kind of stereotyping. This is often a cultural thing that has to do with the values of people that have been acquired over time and influenced by both internal and external factors. Barrenness becomes a weapon for the oppression and abuse of women, mainly by their husbands and even the in-laws. This gender imbalance issue emanates from our patriarchal system that puts men in superior positions to women.

Infertility has been regarded as a women's problem or condition by some people. Although infertility is traditionally situated within the compass of medicine, it has a greater influence on how social construction understands the phenomenon with regard to both men and women. Because this phenomenon is mostly gender-defined, society shifts the blame for being childless onto women. This is so, probably because a woman is the one who carries and gives birth to a child. In some African societies, the essence of womanhood is mostly defined by her capacity to be a mother i.e., to bear her own child (60).

The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives is an example of the unbearable pain African women are subjected to on the basis of childlessness. In order to secure and maintain their positions in their matrimonial home, the uneducated wives of Baba Segi involve themselves in adulterous acts. Iya Segi, the first wife of Baba Segi, also craves motherhood. Her husband subjects her to herbal treatments and frequent love-making to no avail: "My husband and I tried everything. He did not let my thighs rest but leaped between them every

time dusk descended upon us. Even his mother was hungry for his seed to become fruit.” (215) Desperate, she seduces Taju, her husband’s driver, and sleeps with him. Within a few months of their affair, “her belly swelled like a boil” (223).

Should a woman get married and give birth first to qualify for the status of respect? If this is not a new model of patriarchy, then oppressive systems unfold in multiple dimensions against women. Widge, as cited by Segalo, argues that “Because she is defined by her fertility, it can then be assumed that a woman internalises the motherhood role to the extent that if she is infertile or childless, she feels worthless. (4) But feeling worthless has to do with the thought of being a failure from the constructs of society and the level of comprehension of the meaning and role of women in society. Segalo reminds us that because children play a very important role in many societies, childlessness is socially regarded as a crisis for couples. Even Iya Segi’s mother means that a woman remains without having children as a ghost and also, she means that the very purpose of the women in this world is to bear children. “It is every woman’s life purpose to bear children. Do you want to become a ghost in the world of the living” (101) which also means that a woman who is Barren is a ghost and doesn’t belong to the human community.

Iya Tope, the second wife of Baba Segi, is also having difficulty in conceiving. Becoming impatient, Baba threatens: “If your father has sold me a rotten fruit, it will be returned to him” (84). Iya Segi steals into Iya Tope’s room to advise her “Get pregnant quickly or he will start to force-feed you bitter

concoctions from medicine men until your belly rumbles in your sleep” (83). So, with Iya Segi’s evil advice coupled with the pressure, Baba Segi is mounting on her, Iya Tope sleeps with a meat-seller who gets her pregnant. She is even forced to pay money to get conceived by the meat seller. Iya Tope gathers all the money Baba Segi gave her and informs Iya Segi about giving that money to the meat seller and she, even more, encourages her to involve in an adulterous act to get herself pregnant. “Make sure something worthwhile comes out of all this foolishness” she even threatens her by reminding her that if she doesn’t give birth to a child she will be sent back to her house. “The days are passing quickly and the village calls you!” (85) put differently, the inability to procreate, regardless of one’s medical status, constitutes a major life crisis and does place women’s credibility at stake. Infertility is a medical phenomenon that is not a female problem. It is a human problem and must be understood as such. The fact that males are defined and categorised as humans, like females, indicates that they are not exempted from the possibility of being infertile.

Iya Segi also revealed the secret of Baba Segi’s sterility to the third wife, Iya Femi, oblivious of the fact that Iya Femi has already helped herself by getting pregnant for Tunde, a man she knew before she married Baba Segi. The moral turpitude of the Iyas confirms Ambrosini and Stanghellini’s submission that “infertility is considered a woman’s worst fate, a “flaw” that can exacerbate the vicious side of her personality and bring her closer to the devil” (278). This, therefore, places an urgent call on the need to debunk the myth of motherhood. This is because it may constitute a problem the society may not be able to

handle.

Bolanle is the fourth wife of Baba Segi who is also having difficulty in conceiving. However, she refuses to avail herself of herbal treatment as requested by her husband. Displeased with her attitude, Baba Segi complains to his friends, Teacher, and Olaopa, how she refuses to go to the herbalists for treatment and the agony that her barrenness has caused him (4). On hearing this, Olaopa suggests to Baba Segi to “drag her to a medicine man if she doesn’t follow...” (4). Olaopa makes this suggestion because a woman’s infertility is subjected to the controlling gaze of the macho. Bolanle also turns down her husband’s suggestion of going to see a prophet who would lay hands on her belly and perform a miracle (43). Angry, Baba Segi explodes,

Does your blood not boil when you see other women carrying babies on their backs? Do tears not fill your eyes when you see mothers suckling infants? ...Offspring make our visit to this world complete. Do you want to remain a barren maggot? (43)

The armchair in Baba Segi’s household symbolizes this marital position “The tradition was that the comfort of an armchair had to be earned, which meant that unless you were pregnant, with edema, breastfeeding or watching over toddlers, you were not entitled to one” (53). This situation is more biting in a polygamous home because the woman becomes a thing of ridicule not just in the hands of her husband but also in those of her co-wives. Although “the ideology of motherhood differs according to the sociocultural context, ethnicity, and class” (61), motherhood has sociologically been given connotations of respect and

power with conditions attached to it. For example, some people recognise a woman as respectable and really strong as a mother on the birth of a child. In a case where a child is not born, they are often victimised and called names. Another example of this is observed in the case of Bolanle in the novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*. It would appear that the qualities of respect are placed on women for a short period, until they pass the test i.e., proving their womanhood through marriage and motherhood, and then it becomes permanent. So, giving birth is one of the major criteria societies employs to measure the worth of women.

In the course of time, Baba Segi takes Bolanle to the hospital to investigate her presumed barrenness. Convinced that Bolanle is the cause of their childlessness, he says to the doctor “I would have had more than ten now if this woman’s womb was not hostile to my seed.” (37) Eventually, Bolanle and Baba Segi avail themselves of medical examination. The result shows that Bolanle has no medical problem. The doctor intimates to her “I cannot see any immediate reasons why you shouldn’t be able to conceive” (170) while that of Baba Segi shows that he does not have “a solitary sperm swimming around” (194). Bolanle’s arrival at Baba Segi’s home is also a blessing in disguise. Until now, Baba Segi was confident of his virility with seven children to his account. This is why he brazenly accused Bolanle in the presence of the doctor that her womb was hostile to his seed (37). However, the result of the medical tests shows that Baba Segi is sterile “Not a solitary sperm swimming around” (194). Curious, Dr. Dibia asks Baba Segi to bring

one of his wives to see him and complete the investigation. He takes Iya Segi to the hospital and oblivious of what is awaiting him, proudly introduces her “Doctors, this is my first wife. No man could have a better one” (214). Dr. Dibia introduces the subject matter and Iya Segi without hesitation rattles “I know the reason why Bolanle has not conceived...and it is not one that a thousand doctors can cure...” (215). She continues

I was a young wife when I found myself in a cloud of sadness. I was childless and restless. Every time I saw a mother rocking a baby on her back, my nipples would itch to be suckled. My husband and I tried everything... Then I had an idea. It was a sinful idea but I know it would bring my sadness to an end. In fact, it was more than an idea; it promised to be a solution. If my husband did not have the seed then what harm could it do to seek it elsewhere...So I found the seed and planted it in my belly”.
(215)

She categorically states that Baba Segi is not the biological father of her children nor is he the father of the other children in his household. She confesses,

I misled them. Perhaps if I had not shown the second my way, this shame would have come out sooner. But you see, they were so desperate to be fruitful. They knew that my husband valued children above all things so when I saw their desperation, I took pity on them and shared my secret. They also followed the same

path. (216)

On hearing this, “Baba Segi’s head was bowed...His tears hit the floor with a quiet splat” (216). Baba Segi’s bloated ego as a macho is hereby deflated.

It is unbearable in that it locates women to a level beneath the human. Women face societal criticism and mockery because of childlessness. In many South African communities, women are seen as objects in marriage, while their male counterparts are seen as agents. They are even blamed for challenges related to infertility because, in such patriarchal communities, men cannot be infertile. It is as if there is a lot wrong with their wombs, without looking at the potential defects of manhood.

Women grapple with dilemmas, challenges, and unbearable pains and are often blamed for infertility in marriage, without consideration for the fact that medical problems. Baba Segi is confident in his virility and stature as a patriarch. Hanna and Gough indicate that some women voluntarily protect their infertile husbands given the stigma that is attached to male infertility. They point out that “women often shoulder the blame for fertility problems even when male-factor infertility has been diagnosed.” (6) Surprisingly, in a case where a woman is medically found to be infertile, she is exploited, called names, and subjected to divorce and other acts that may denigrate the essence of her womanhood. Shoneyin uses her character Bolanle in the portrayal of the fact that marriage and procreation should not be burdens on the woman.

According to Hollos and Larsen, “most African societies have been

found to be strongly pronatalist who mandate parenthood. In this context, infertility is especially problematic and is not considered a matter of choice.” (161) Most involuntary childless women suffer personal grief and frustration, social stigma, and exclusion as they are seen to be fruitless in their own societies. They are blamed for reproductive mishaps, and in some instances, infertility constitutes grounds for divorce, causing a woman to lose access to her livelihood. With this in mind, it confirms Rosemary Ruether’s argument that “women’s sexuality and their wombs are being controlled” (64), either by those subscribing to pronatalism ideology or by patriarchs to advance their own agenda.

The apparent barrenness of Bolanle, his beloved and educated fourth wife, causes him much concern. His three other wives had, unbeknownst to him, solved the problems of childbearing in their own unique, crafty ways. The success of Bolanle’s marriage was determined by her ability to give birth. But Bolanle insists that she and her husband take a test. He learns that he is, indeed, not as virile as he had claimed. Baba Segi made it very clear to Bolanle that her barrenness brought shame on him in society. Baba Segi asked Bolanle what “was wrong with her womb” (84). It is on this basis that feminist theologians, such as Ruether, argued correctly that a “Woman’s body - her reproductive process - becomes owned by men, defined from a male point of view. Women are seen as reproducing children and producing cooked food and clothes for men.” (64) In agreement with the description offered by Ruether, Baba Segi saw nothing valuable in Bolanle except that

she is a woman whom he married to give birth. This despite his earlier feelings when they met, as Baba Segi did not forget his patriarchal position. Her educational qualifications meant nothing to him as the patriarch of the household.

According to Eze, Baba Segi does not feel the pain of his wife's supposed barrenness because it disturbs his wife, but because it apparently makes people think that he is no longer a man. (319) Bolanle is at the center of what is claimed to be a societal norm, that is, any married woman should give birth. Bolanle thus struggled to face her own people and community. Moreover, her barren state is used as a means to psychologically control her. Baba Segi's focus was on getting what he wanted and not sympathetically responding to the situation faced by his fourth wife. Bolanle's supposed barrenness made Baba Segi refer to her as a thing, thus throwing light on the quality of their intersubjective relationship.

Bolanle is hated by her husband and she longs for his love. She wishes to regain the love by becoming pregnant and bearing him a child. She also believes that the other wives would accept her as one among them if she becomes pregnant and gives birth to a child. "One day I will have a child of my own and everything will fall into its place. My husband will delight in me again, the way he did before my barrenness ate away at his affection" (23) There is also self realisation of Baba Segi who realises that he was not loving and caring to Bolanle. He avoided her because of her barrenness. " Well, in recent months, I myself have been hostile to the young woman but only

because of this question of her barrenness.”(63)

Baba Segi sees Bolanle as an investment. The fruit of it is a child. One day when Bolanle was not found in her room, Iya Segi in order to add fuel to the burning fire said that Bolanle had run away from his house. So, Baba Segi becomes panic and thus gives out the picture of Bolanle in his mind through his words. “All the money I have spent on her is wasted.”(24) Baba Segi considers the womb to be a machine that produces children. He says this to the doctor when he enquired about Bolanle’s illness. He never failed to remind her that “she is Barren” (36).

The other wives torture and hurt her to an extent telling “Of what use is she? She cannot have children. Her womb is dead.”(58) As Emecheta puts it that “women are quarrelsome and jealous” (555), the unwholesome behaviours which the others of Baba Segi’s wives exhibit towards her do not completely inhibit her. Ironically, such rivalry fully exposes their adulterous adventures and the oppressive nature of polygamy. Their behavior towards this educated wife of Baba Segi confirms the assertion of Orabueze that “women are always afraid and uncomfortable with other women who have their own minds and are liberated. They do all they can to bring them to their lowly level” (289). For those who subscribe to religious beliefs, such as Christianity and African traditional religion, a child is acknowledged as a gift from the supreme God and that he is in control of the human species in full. Masenya argues, “Women’s sexuality is often defined and controlled by men both in the church and in the households. Female bodies become sacrifices at

the altars of male power and pleasure” (102). The level at which some societies understand women as sexual objects whose role is to satisfy men’s sexual desire and procreate but never about how women feel is problematic. Chapter five sums up the important precepts dealt in the previous chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

Shoneyin's novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, narrates a family unit built on dishonesty and secrets, which kept the family together for a while. Although the novel relates a devastating secret in Baba Segi's polygamous house, the main focus in this article is on the trials faced by Bolanle, Baba Segi's fourth wife, and how she carried herself through it all.

The novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* is used as a case study in response to similar situations faced by many African women in different societies, especially in the South African context. The novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* deals with the predicament faced by an African woman, dilemmas, challenges, and unbearable pains of women who are often blamed for infertility in marriage, without consideration of the fact that medical problems leading to infertility are non-discriminatory in nature. In this fascinating novel, Lola Shoneyin wrestles with several cultural pressures in marriage, which are also prevalent among black women in South African communities. It argues that women's sexuality is viewed with a patriarchal prejudice, the referral of infertile woman as worthless, which in essence reveals the quality of their intersubjective relationship, depicts men as the agents and women as the objects in marriage and that the order of the African family unit is deeply constructed on gender lop sidedness.

In the novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* Lola Shoneyin has tackled several widespread contemporary African cultural stresses, though her text is clearly located in urban Nigeria with a preponderance of Yoruba practices and presences overlaid by Muslim and Christian affiliations. Personal relationships, individual value systems, and each character's ways of managing and negotiating her and sometimes his circumstances are much more central to the text. However, with a plot as complex as the one deployed here, one needs to keep one's wits about one as the secrets alluded to in the title gradually unfold or are suddenly exposed to the reader and to one or other of the characters.

A stirring tale of men and women, mothers and children, servitude and independence, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* illuminates the common threads that connect the experiences of all women, the hardships they bear, their struggle to define themselves, and their fierce desire to protect those they love. For Baba Segi, his collection of wives and gaggle of children are a symbol of prosperity, success, and a validation of his manhood. All is well in this patriarchal home until Baba Segi arrives with wife number four a quiet, college educated, young woman named Bolanle. Jealous and resentful of this interloper who is stealing their husband's attention, Baba Segi's three wives begin to plan her downfall. How dare she offer to teach them to read, they whisper. They vow to teach her a lesson instead. What they don't know is that Bolanle hides a terrible secret, a secret that unwittingly exposes the deception and lies upon Baba Segi's household rests.

The novel begins with a problem and Baba Segi was worried about her fourth wife who did not conceive after some years from their marriage. So, he searches for a solution to solve the problem of her infertility. The other three wives feel jealous of the fourth one named Bolanle, who is educated and well-mannered and they make so many plans to chase her out of the house. The first wife is shown as a dominating figure in this novel. When Bolanle was finally taken to the hospital to find the reason for her infertility. The secret is finally broken down. Baba Segi finally comes to know the reason for her barrenness and discovers that he was sterile. He got affected by some illness when he was a young boy which made him sterile. Baba Segi is the family head, and he's an interesting character. He's overweight, prone to flatulence, and chauvinistic. He has two children with his first wife, Iya Segi, who loves to remind all the other women that she's the first and surely the most important. Wife two, Iya Tope, has three children. Iya Femi is wife number three, and she has two children. She's materialistic and often teams up with Iya Segi to boss Iya Tope around. This unconventional dynamic somehow works for everyone that is, until wife number four, Bolanle, becomes part of the family.

Bolanle is a university graduate and is nothing like the other three wives. Her outlooks are fairly modern and progressive, and she doesn't yet have any children. She has her own reasons for wanting to marry into a union like this, as do all the wives. Bolanle's mother is incensed that she's throwing herself away on someone like Baba Segi, but she can't stop her from making the decision.

There's a sense of strength and female autonomy in Bolanle even making her own choice like this.

Baba Segi is illiterate, and he's only interested in siring children with her. He wants to convince himself he's still fertile and attractive enough to have a new, young wife. It's hard to have much sympathy for an unlikeable character such as Baba Segi, but his other wives make life difficult enough for him that it's possible.

When Bolanle arrives, Baba Segi tries to get her pregnant quickly. However, as the weeks and months go by, she can't get pregnant, and he doesn't understand why. He doesn't know what else to do and starts to doubt her value for him. Teacher, Baba Segi's friend, suggests they visit a hospital and see what's wrong with her as far as they are concerned, it can only be Bolanle's fault. The males in the family and friend group all assume women have one job to do, which she's not performing properly.

To make matters worse for Bolanle, she never fully gets the dynamics of Baba Segi's polygamous household. The other women keep secrets from her and never fully invite her into their circle. She doesn't even have her own armchair, because she's not earned her place until she gets pregnant. Throughout it all, it's not clear to the reader why anyone like Bolanle would choose to live a life like this. That confusion is crucial to the novel's plot and character development. Bolanle hasn't forgiven herself for a sexual trauma she experienced when she was a teenager. She doesn't think she deserves anything better than this life. For all her education and potential opportunities, she thinks this is all she can get.

She continually blames outside circumstances as opposed to looking inwards and taking her power back.

Similarly, the other women end up in Baba Segi's circle because of trauma and pain. They're all victims of things that happened to them many years ago, for which society makes them think there are no better options. It's this self-imprisonment that brings about the downfall of all four wives even if Bolanle can be blamed for how it begins.

Interestingly, it's the quiet and unassuming Iya Tope who's having an affair and cheating on Baba Segi. She finds some degree of sexual satisfaction from this, and doesn't try to dominate the household because, frankly, it's not too important to her. She married out of necessity, but her life is true elsewhere. This is an intriguing revelation.

As it turns out, the children in this novel have different fathers much to Baba Segi's surprise at the end. He discovers Iya Tope is not the only unfaithful wife and he, in fact, is the one with trouble conceiving. This is why Bolanle, who has no other sexual relationships, can't get pregnant. Baba Segi, however, doesn't turn these children out or abandon them. To him, they are family, and he treats them like his own. This is compelling character development. Bolanle ultimately leaves the household once she rediscovers her own power and her ability to heal from past traumas. In *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, there is a clear feminist overtone.

In this novel, one could understand that polygamy in the life of Aloa family leads to many moral issues of being unfaithful, jealous, murderous. The

wives run the family within a particular secret. As far as the major characters are concerned, the secret that Baba Segi is infertile, is a secret only from Bolanle, the new and fourth wife, and Baba Segi himself. The “secret” is so well managed in the narrative that sharp readers can guess but have it finally confirmed only at the end of the novel.

Thus, a novel that purportedly shows the oppression of voiceless women under the patriarchal system of traditional polygyny portrays one wife who is the Nigerian equivalent of the Victorian self-made man, who dreams of one day indulging her lesbian inclinations and eyes young women from the top of her multi-storey mansion. It presents a second wife who is a simple-minded but well-intentioned sex addict and a third wife who acts on her vaulting ambition herself and not by proxy. In the contemporary Nigerian context in which they find themselves, these avenues open up from the space of the polygynous household, which is secured only through procreation. Bearing children, rather than romantic love, has been the foundation of African cultural approaches to marriage. The corollary of this idea is not, however, that love does not exist, but rather that Love is not the major social rationale for marriage. Paradoxically, the wives of this formal polygynous household become informally polyandrous in order to protect material and emotional well-being. They also make the rational choice to stay in the household even when they have the opportunity to leave at the end of the novel. Their decision is not motivated by, nor does it aspire to, any Yoruba cultural ideal or notion of Yoruba identity. Moreover, this novel presents the rural model of the polygynous household transferred into the city.

Shoneyin's novel involves the modern trend changes and depicts the change in which men appeal to tradition to formalise adulterous relationships with women who are then married and kept in separate homes. Shoneyin's Guardian article implies that polygyny is a traditional institution with no place in the modern world that it inherently oppresses women that household rivalries, jealousies, and hierarchies are completely destructive of wives and children. Apart from the peripheral upper-middle-class characters like the man who rapes Bolanle and the family of Segun, Bolanle's first true love, Iya Segi is the only character who prospers financially. All of the other characters endure lives of inescapable poverty that drive them to act in morally and culturally reprehensible ways in order to survive.

In fact, the dominant tone of the novel is of poverty and hardship, *Secret Lives* also tests the judgments of its author in other ways. In the first place, it destabilises the familiar dichotomy that underpins analyses of intimate relations in which polygyny is associated with the timeless and unchanging village and monogamy with the transforming modernity of the city. Two of the wives, Iya Tope and Iya Femi, come from monogamous Yoruba and Muslim families in the village, where the religious sanction of polygyny is supposed to reinforce indigenous African customs but, in this case, does not. Iya Segi and the husband, Ishola Alao, come from single parent families headed by strong and successful village matriarchs. Traditional family relationships thus appear quite unproblematically to encompass monogamy and single parent families whose

households sometimes suffer extreme poverty but seem generally settled, happy, and secure.

The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives is an example of the unbearable pain African women are subjected to on the basis of childlessness. In order to secure and maintain their positions in their matrimonial home, the uneducated wives of Baba Segi involve themselves in adulterous acts. Iya Segi, the first wife of Baba Segi, also craves motherhood. Her husband subjects her to herbal treatments and frequent love-making to no avail. Desperate, she seduces Taju, her husband's driver, and sleeps with him. Within a few months of their affair, her belly swelled like a boil. Iya Tope, the second wife of Baba Segi, is also having difficulty in conceiving. Becoming impatient, Baba threatens her to send her back to her village. Iya Segi steals into Iya Tope's room to advise her to get pregnant quickly. So, with Iya Segi's evil advice coupled with the pressure, Baba Segi is mounting on her, Iya Tope sleeps with a meat-seller who gets her pregnant.

Iya Segi also revealed the secret of Baba Segi's sterility to the third wife, Iya Femi, oblivious of the fact that Iya Femi has already helped herself by getting pregnant for Tunde, a man she knew before she married Baba Segi. Bolanle is the fourth wife of Baba Segi who is also having difficulty in conceiving. However, she refuses to avail herself of herbal treatment as requested by her husband. Displeased with her attitude, Baba Segi complains to his friends, Teacher, and Olaopa, how she refuses to go to the herbalists for treatment and the agony that her barrenness has caused him. In many South

African communities, women are seen as objects in marriage, while their male counterparts are seen as agents. They are even blamed for challenges related to infertility because, in such patriarchal communities, men cannot be infertile. It is as if there is a lot wrong with their wombs, without looking at the potential defects of manhood.

Women grapple with dilemmas, challenges, and unbearable pains and are often blamed for infertility in marriage, without consideration for the fact that medical problems. Baba Segi is confident in his virility and stature as a patriarch. The apparent barrenness of Bolanle, his beloved and educated fourth wife, causes him much concern. His three other wives had, unbeknownst to him, solved the problems of childbearing in their own unique, crafty ways. The success of Bolanle's marriage was determined by her ability to give birth. But Bolanle insists that she and her husband take a test. He learns that he is, indeed, not as virile as he had claimed. Baba Segi made it very clear to Bolanle that her barrenness brought shame on him in society. Women are seen as reproducing children and producing cooked food and clothes for men. Baba Segi saw nothing valuable in Bolanle except that she is a woman whom he married to give birth. This despite his earlier feelings when they met, as Baba Segi did not forget his patriarchal position. Her educational qualifications meant nothing to him as the patriarch of the household. Baba Segi sees Bolanle as an investment. The fruit of it is a child. The other wives torture and hurt her to an extent telling "Of what use is she? She cannot have children. Her womb is dead." (58)

Thus the novel clearly deals with the struggles women face in Baba

Segi's house. Women Struggle out of poverty, slavery, sexual abuse, jealousy, and the pressures of society makes them struggle even more. The novel makes the readers understand the situation of the characters and accept their flaws and faults. The readers could clearly understand the struggles of women in this novel and how they have been forced to take refuge in a heartless world.



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From Suppression to Liberation: A Study of Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(REG. NO. 19APEN05)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO
ONE	INTRODUCTION	1
TWO	RACIAL DISCRIMINATION	12
THREE	OMNIPOTENCE OF EDUCATION	25
FOUR	NARRATIVE STYLE AND LITERARY TECHNIQUES	36
FIVE	SUMMATION	46
	WORKS CITED	52

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **From Suppression to Liberation: A Study of Maya Angelou's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by **Arul Maria Thilothana. A** during the year 2019-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Ms. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Ms. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

GUIDE

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

EXAMINER

PRINCIPAL

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **From Suppression to Liberation: A Study of Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

THOOTHUKUDI

ARUL MARIA THILOTHANA. A

APRIL 2021

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PREFACE

This project **entitled From Suppression to Liberation: A Study of Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*** highlights the conflicts faced by the coloured people in the white dominating society and how the education helps them to liberate themselves from their suppression.

The first chapter **Introduction** discusses about the author and her works of honour, the evolution of autobiographical novel and provides information about the history of African American Literature.

The second chapter **Racial Discrimination** portrays the racial conflicts encountered by the protagonist and the coloured people in the day-to-day life of America.

The third chapter **Omnipotence of Education** focuses on the various incidents in which the protagonist educates herself and stands as a light of liberation in the white society that darkens the life of coloured people.

The fourth chapter deals with a bunch of **Narrative Style and Literary Techniques** highlights the various techniques used by the author to make it a remarkable autobiographical novel.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It also presents the narrative technique employed by the writer and validates the study.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Literature is the art of discovering something extraordinary about ordinary people and saying with ordinary words something extraordinary. Literature bursts out at the boundary of extreme emotion packed with experience, reality, imagination and sufferings. Literature is a mirror, which reflects life in a clear manner to the eyes of the beholder. Literature is reflection of life itself.

African American Literature is one of the pearls among the Sea of Literature. Like other Literatures, African American Literature has its own history and beauty. African American literature written by Americans of African descent contains the body of written works produced in the English Language. Not only the peaceful and happy situation produces Literature but also suffocations. The history of African American literature is vast and varied. African American literature comes out from the voice of the suppressed Africans bought as slaves to America. African American literature sets back to African slave's earliest arrival to the new world in 1939, when they forged the language and literature of their own. At the heart of this body of work lies the African American vernacular tradition. This tradition includes oral forms of expression existing prior to African slave's abilities to read and write in the English Language.

Blacks have undergone several physical, mental and sexual sufferings in the country by their white masters. They were even restricted to voice out their sufferings and feelings. Earlier the only means of their exposure was through songs but later they started bringing out their feelings in the form of words known as Slave narrative. With the abolition of slavery in 1865 by President Abraham Lincoln, the African American literature took a new turn. Stimson says the act states, "Neither slavery nor involuntary

servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction” (118).

The African American literature categorized into many periods starts from the eighteenth century. The twentieth century is known for many important historical events that had taken place. The American Civil War, Great Depression, Second World War, Civil Rights Act, Harlem Renaissance as well as changes in the way of thinking, feeling and economy brought many modifications in people's lives. All these things bring out the suffocations of the people in the country in the form of literature, as the only means.

Harlem Renaissance that is widely known as the New Negro Movement at that time was the Golden era of the Black American writers. The Harlem Renaissance from 1920 to 1940 was a flowering period of African American literature and art. Based on the African American community of Harlem in New York City, it was part of large flowering of social thoughts and culture. Before the Harlem Renaissance, the blacks were free as far as their physical world is concerned. But mentally they have been bound by the chains of racial discrimination. Even the education and the migration of the Blacks from the south to the north, worsened their psychological state thereby completely shattering their inner self. The New Negro Movement of the 1920s, epitomized in *The New Negro* by Alain Locke that featured the early work of some of the most gifted Harlem Renaissance writers including the poets Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes and Claude McKay and the novelists Rudolph Fisher, Zora Neale Hurston and Jean Toomer.

The New Negro Movement is totally opposite to that of the Old Negro in assertiveness and self-confidence; this leads the New Negro writers to question the traditional 'white' aesthetic standards to shun parochialism and propaganda and to

cultivate personal self-expression, racial pride and literary experiments. McKay is generally regarded as the first major poet of the Harlem Renaissance. His best poetry includes sonnets ranging from the militant *If We Must Die* (1919) to the brooding self-portrait outcast which was collected in *Harlem Shadows* which was considered as the first great literary achievement of Harlem Renaissance. Hughes found ways to write in an African American street vernacular that registers a much wider and deeper spectrum than that of Dunbar's representation in his poetry. Hughes earned his greatest praise for his experimental jazz and blues poetry in *The Weary Blues* (1926) and *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927). James Weldon Johnson embraced the African American oral tradition in *God's Trombones* (1927), his verse tribute to the folk sermon tradition of Southern Blacks.

McKay and Hughes made name for themselves in prose as well. A lasting achievement in autobiography was Hughes's *The Big Sea* (1940), which contains the most insightful and unsentimental first person account of the Harlem Renaissance ever published. Renaissance has published a masterwork that guaranteed the permanent reputation among African American novelists. In *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), Hurston embodied the sustaining ethos of a vibrant working-class Southern Black community in a woman whose sassy tongue and heroic reclamation of herself make Janie Crawford the greatest single literary character created by the New Negro generation.

During the Great Depression, *The Chicago Defender*, one of the premier African American newspapers of the 20th century, portrayed the Windy City as a cultural and economic Mecca for Black migrants fleeing the South. African American drama advanced during the Great Depression led by Abraham Hill, founder of the American Negro Theatre in Harlem. By the early 1940s, three figures, Melvin B. Tolson, Robert Hayden and Gwendolyn Brooks, were showing how the vernacular tradition could be

adapted to modernist experimentation. Hayden's meditative history poems such as *Middle Passage* (1945) and *Frederick Douglass* (1947) and Brookes's tribute to the vitality and rigors of Black urban life in *A Street in Bronzeville* (1945) and her Pulitzer Prize winning volume, *Annie Allen* (1949).

The 1940s was also a decade of creative experimentation in autobiography, led by Du Bois's *Dusk of Dawn* (1940), a self-styled essay toward an autobiography of a race concept. In 1949 the young New York essayist James Baldwin, a protégé of Wright published *Everybody's Protest Novel* (1949). The most enduring African American novel, called a modern Odysseus of the 1950s is Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952). The novel won the National Book Award in 1953, reflecting the enormously positive critical reception the novel enjoyed. James Baldwin's first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953) testified a new experiment to the sophisticated formal experimentation and piercing examination of which the writers coming of age in the 1950s were capable.

During the decade following the Second World War, professional African American dramatists such as William Blackwell Branch and Loftin Mitchell found greater access to the white American theatre than any previous generation of Black playwrights has known. Baldwin began a dramatic career in 1955 with *The Amen Corner*, which focuses on a female preacher in a Harlem storefront church. Hughes continued his stage presence with his musical comedy *Simply Heavenly* (1957).

Among the Literature of Civil Rights, Hansberry was one of several African American writers most prominently Baldwin and Alice Walker to take an active part in the civil rights movement and to be energized, imaginatively and socially by the freedom struggles of the late 1950s and 1960s. The murder of Emmett Till, a Black teenager

visiting Mississippi in 1955, led Gwendolyn Brooks to compose *The Last Quatrain of Ballad of Emmett Till*.

The assassination of Malcolm X, eloquent exponent of Black Nationalism in 1965 in New York and the espousal of Black Power by previously integrationist civil rights organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Congress of Racial Equality helped to galvanize a generation of young Black writers into rethinking the purpose of African American art. The Black Arts movement engaged in cultural nation building by sponsoring poetry readings, founding community theatres, creating literary magazines and setting up small presses. In 1968 poetry, fiction, essays and drama from writers associated with the movement appeared in the landmark anthology *Black Fire* which were edited by Baraka and Larry Neal. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965), collaboration between Malcolm X and journalist-author Alex Haley provided a standard that Anne Moody's *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (1968), George Jackson's *Soledad Brother* (1970), and Angela Davis's *Angela Davis: An Autobiography* (1974) sought to emulate.

The developments that occurred between 1950s and 1960s in the arena of literature helped literature to bloom with variety of literary, cultural and political progress. The expanding presence of Black women's experience and expressive traditions in African American writing and the impact of the women's movement on African American women's consciousness fostered termed the Black women's literary renaissance of the 1970s. This outpouring of creative energy by African American women, especially in fiction, had a long foreground. Toni Morrison is generally considered great for her founding text, *The Bluest Eye* (1970). Her works considerably *Sula* (1973) and *Song of Solomon* (1977) have a great reach among the African American audience. Along with Morrison Alice Walker punctuated the decade with a series of

controversial books: *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970), *Revolutionary Petunias and Other Poems* (1973) and *Meridian* (1976). The most famous novel of Alice Walker is *The Color Purple* (1982).

The remarkable sustained popularity of Maya Angelou's autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970), is one of the most widely read and taught books by an African American woman. This work demonstrates the lasting appeal to white as well as Black American readers of much contemporary African American women writing, especially when the upbeat, woman-affirming outlook typified by Angelou's prose and poetry informs it. Maya Angelou lauded as a multifaceted superstar, a tall, gap-toothed, spirited individualist who was a labelled feminist writer, African American autobiography writer, historian, lecturer, journalist, activist, filmmaker, poet, singer, actor and storyteller. Angelou set out to whip a variety of challenges, including the language barrier a learned French, Italian, Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, Arabic and Fanti, a Ghanaian dialect. Angelou, best known for her books of poetry and autobiographies as well as her active participation in the Civil Rights Movement involved her to work with Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.

Angelou was born Marguerite Ann Johnson in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 4, 1928. The second child and the first daughter of Bailey Johnson and Vivian Baxter Johnson. She had a difficult childhood. Her parents split up when she was very young and she and her older brother, Bailey, were sent to live with their father's mother, Anne Henderson, in Stamps, Arkansas. As an African American, Angelou experienced firsthand racial prejudices and discrimination in Arkansas. As an African American, Angelou experienced firsthand racial prejudices and discrimination in Arkansas. She also suffered at the hands of a family associated around the age of seven: During a visit with her mother, her mother's boyfriend raped Angelou. As vengeance for the sexual assault,

Angelou's uncles killed her mother's boyfriend. So traumatized by the experience, Angelou stopped talking. She returned to Arkansas and spent years as a virtual mute.

During the Second World War, Angelou moved to San Francisco, California. There she won a scholarship to study dance and acting at the California Labor School, in California. During this time, Angelou became the first Black female cable car conductor a job she held only briefly in San Francisco. In the mid 1950s, Angelou's career as a performer began to take off. She landed a role in a touring production of *Porgy and Bess*, Later appearing in the Broadway production *Calypso Heat Wave* (1957) and releasing her first album, *Miss Calypso* (1957)

Angelou was born in the period of Harlem Renaissance brought up in the years of Second World War and the Great Depression which inspired her to join in the Harlem Writers Guild in 1950s. Later the Speech of Martin Luther King Jr. inspired her and she joined the Civil Rights Movement. As member of the Harlem Writers Guild and a Civil Rights activist, Angelou organized and starred in the musical revue *Cabaret for Freedom* as a benefit for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, also serving as the SCLC's northern coordinator.

In 1961, Angelou appeared in an off-Broadway production of Jean Genet's *The Blacks* with James Earl Jones, Lou Gossett Jr. and Cicely Tyson. Angelou went on to earn a Tony Award nomination for her role in the play *Look Away* (1973) and an Emmy Award nomination for her work on the television miniseries *Roots* (1977) among other honors. Angelou spent much of the 1960s abroad, living first in Egypt and then in Ghana, working as an editor and a freelance writer. Angelou also held a position at the University of Ghana for a time. In Ghana, she also joined a community of Revolutionist Returnees exploring pan-Africanism and became close with human rights activist and

Black Nationalist leader Malcolm X. In 1964, upon returning to the United States, Angelou helped Malcolm X set up the Organization of Afro-American Unity, which disbanded after his assassination the following year.

Angelou published several collections of poetry, but her most famous collection was 1971s collection *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Die* (1971) which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. Other famous collections of Angelou's poetry include *Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well* (1975) which includes Angelou's poem *Alone, And Still I Rise* (1978), which features the beloved poem *Phenomenal Woman, Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?* (1983), *I Shall Not Be Moved* (1990), *Even the Stars Look Lonesome* (1997). *On the Pulse of Morning* (1993) was one of her most famous works. Angelou wrote this poem especially for President Bill Clinton's inaugural ceremony and recited in January 1993. The occasion marked the first inaugural recitation since 1961 when Robert Frost delivered his poem *The Gift Outright* at John F. Kennedy's inauguration. Angelou went on to win a Grammy Award for the audio version of the poem. Other well-known poems include *His Day Is Done* (1962) and *Amazing Peace* (2005).

Angelou as an autobiography writer published a series of seven autobiographical stories such as *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) which deals with the early part of her life from the age of three to the age of seventeen. *Gather Together in My Name* (1974) follows the events described in the first book and follows Angelou called Rita, from the ages of seventeen to nineteen. *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* (1976) is the third autobiography which moves Angelou to the world of adult. Set between 1949 and 1955, the book spans Angelou's early twenties where she suffered to manage her life along with her son. It is actually a memoir about the motherhood and music. *The Heart of a Woman* (1981) recounts events in Angelou's life between 1957

and 1962 where she leaves California with her son Guy to move to New York. It shows the unforgettable vignettes of such renowned people such as Billie Holiday and Malcolm. *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (1986) highlights the hopelessness and the theme of displacement. Fifth book in the series of seven volumes set between 1962 and 1965, the book begins when Angelou is thirty-three years old and recounts the years she lived in Accra, Ghana. *A Song Flung Up to Heaven* (2002) sets between 1965 and 1968 when she returns from Africa to the United States to work with Malcolm X. The final and the seventh book is *Mom & Me & Mom* (2013) published shortly before Mother's Day and Angelou's birthday. This book depicts the relationship between her and her mother, Vivian Baxter for the first time. Each book represents Angelou's experience of life in different ages.

Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is the first and the best book among her autobiographical series. In 1970, Random House published it when she was 41 years old. The novel consists of thirty-six chapters. The novel consists of four major characters and twenty-two minor characters. It shows the early years of Angelou. The novel begins when she was three years old and her elder brother was four they were sent to Stamps, Arkansas, to live with their grandmother and ends when Angelou becomes a mother at the age of seventeen. Angelo uses her autobiography to explore identity, rape, racism, literacy and about women's lives in a male dominated society. Maya, the younger version of Angelou and the book's central character, has been called a symbolic central character for every black girl growing up in America. Angelou's description of rape as an eight-year old child overwhelms the book. Another metaphor of a bird struggling to escape its cage is a central image throughout the work that consists of a sequence of lessons about resisting racist oppression. Angelou's treatment of racism provides a thematic unit to the book. Literacy and the power of words help young Maya

cope with her bewildering world. Books become her refuge as she works through her trauma.

Angelou was challenged by her friend, author James Baldwin and her editor, Robert Loomis to write an autobiography that was also a piece of literature. Later reviewers state the book as an autobiographical fiction where she uses thematic development and other techniques common to fiction such as dialogue and characterization. The book nominated for National Book Award in 1970 remained on The New York Times paperback bestseller list for two years and due to this reason Maya Angelou called this book Magnum Opus because of this. Angelou received the Ladies Home Journal Woman of the Year Award in Communications. She was appointed by President Carter to the Commission of International Women's year and is on the Board of Trustees of American Film Institute.

Angelou is the author of the television screenplay *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. The novel has been used in educational settings from high schools to universities, and the book has been celebrated for creating new literary avenues for the American memoir. The title *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was taken from an African American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. She was admired by his works for several years. Jazz vocalist and civil rights activist Abbey Lincoln suggested the title to her. The title of the book comes from the third stanza of Dunbar's poem *Sympathy* (1899).

Angelou, mentioned as Maya in the novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* has highlighted the entire African woman's situation in the American world by the means of suppression, identity crisis. The main theme stressed in the book, is racial discrimination. The blacks in the society have undergone several depressions. Even they were economically equal to the Americans they did not have that independence or respect in

the society. Angelou's grandmother who was economically equal had owned a Store in the central part of Arkansas where no blacks can buy a property. She got only disrespect and insult even by the young white girls. Whereas in the case of Angelou, she found out her identity and stood in the field of literature. She had chosen the right path and paved a way for the identity of coloured people and especially to women in the dominating world. She is celebrated even now for her literary works where she found that equality, respect and her identity.

CHAPTER TWO

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Angelou's novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* depicts the problems and sufferings faced by many coloured people in America. Angelou is mostly concerned about her black community and their sufferings in the white society. American black literature echoes grief, injustice and evil experiences of the blacks, which they receive due to colour discriminations and race discriminations. The white masters consider themselves superior to the black. King Jr. rightly mentioned in his writings "It is the absurd dogma that one race is dependable for the future. Racism is estrangement. It separates not only bodies but minds and spirits. Inevitably it descends to inflicting spiritual or physical homicide upon the out-group." (70)

Angelou's novel *I know why the caged Bird sings* has been the subject of interpretations focusing on the historical role of racial discrimination during the Great depression and period of Harlem Renaissance. In this novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* Angelou mirrors up the situation of black people especially women in the white world filled with racism. Angelou brilliantly uses Marguerite or Rita or Maya as a major character that shows her own experience as an evidence of racial discrimination. She also employs some minor characters who travelled with her in the struggle of her life. Marguerite has kinky hair, black skin, small and squinty eyes. Despite her physical imperfect she always tries to be brave, strong, clever, be careful with anybody and the society in which she was living.

The novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* starts with the narration of Marguerite Johnson, the protagonist of the novel. Marguerite Johnson is the real birth name of Maya Angelou. The novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* begins on an early

morning of Easter Sunday when Maya was a young child who longs to look beautiful like other white girls in lavender taffeta. Even from the opening pages of the novel, Maya suffered from racial self-hatred, imagining that she was really a white girl with light blue eyes and hair long and blond. As a young girl, she has no self-confidence. Maya believed that she is ugly, so she convinced herself that she is actually white instead of Black “I was going to look like one of the sweet little white girls who were everybody’s dreams of what was right with the world.” (2). Like all the blacks and whites in the African American society, Maya also has a perception that the white children are always beautiful and the coloured are ugly because the white society made her believe so. As a coloured American woman, Momma did not want to change and give up the black people’s style and identity, so she did not allow Maya to straighten the hair.

Angelou felt that living in a racist society is an unexplainable pain for the coloured victims. “If growing up is painful for the Southern Black girl, being aware of her displacement is the rust on the razor that threatens the throat” (4). She even highlights the wild nature of the whites by saying that the coloured never feels safe or comfortable while walking in the streets of the Whites. “We were explorers walking weapons into man-eating animals’ territory” (25).

Maya, at the age of three along with her brother Bailey, who is four year old, reached Stamps, Arkansas from Long Beach, California. Since their father broke up with their mother from the shattering marriage, he shipped them to his mother’s house in Stamps, Arkansas. Angelou uses the word ‘picked’ instead of ‘sent’ to bring the worst state of the people there. He even hired a porter to take care of the children during the journey but the porter pinned the tickets to Bailey’s inside coat pocket and got down from the train next day in Arizona. Like a lifeless luggage, they were tagged with their name and nativity travelled all alone. During their journey, they met many coloured

passengers. They felt pity for this poor children and afford them some food. “United States had been crossed thousands of times by frightened Black Children travelling alone to their newly affluent parents in Northern cities, or back to grandmothers in southern towns” (5-6). In this, context Maya and her brother stand as a synecdoche for the complete coloured community in the United States of America.

The children lived with their grandmother Momma and Uncle Willie in Arkansas. Momma owned Johnson General Merchandise Store for twenty-five years which acted as a gathering place for members of the black community. The Store speaks about the black rural town life during the 1930s. At the end of the Civil War, the coloured were promised for land and animals but right after the period of slavery, Southern blacks entered into the period of discrimination and violence. The Jim Crow era, witnessed the exploitation of the black farmer in the South at the hands of racist whites who sought to suppress the blacks right to property, animals and financial support. This era also brought the segregation laws that affected the coloured people’s life and sparked the development of racist organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan gang, which threatened the black communities. Maya vibrantly describes the cotton picker’s bodies, their torn clothes and their tired faces when they return from the fields.

Angelou’s grandmother, Mrs. Annie Henderson, was a strong symbol of the Black society. She was respected in the Christian community, which was formed by the Black society. Uncle Willie is a physically disabled man. He was crippled from his childhood. Momma’s loyalty even pulled the Sheriff to the store and he informed her about the Klan’s men. Even he warned her to hide Willie from those men’s sight tonight. ““Annie, tell Willie he better lay low tonight. A crazy nigger messed with a white lady tonight. Some of the boys’ll be coming over here later”” (17). Maya saw Uncle Willie who is forced to hide inside the potato bin when Sheriff casually warned about the Ku Klux Klan

men's coming in search of a coloured man. Even though Willie could not commit any crime due to his disability, he is found to be guilty being a coloured man. He was suspected just because of coloured race in the State of America. This incident of white dominance often opens the eyes of Maya and disturbs her that she belonged to an oppressed class.

The cruel racist behaviour not only spoiled the minds of the adults but also the innocent white children. When Maya was ten years old, this incident attacked her heart very much. The white kids were the troublemakers who caused more trouble to Momma and did not allow her to work peacefully in her store. The white girls were denoted as powhitetrash. The white kids were not ready to respect the aged Momma. They imitated her actions and disturbed her. Momma stood solidly on her deck, smiling and humming a hymn. When the girls found that she does not care about any mockeries and faces, one made a handstand.

At first they pretended seriousness. Then one of them wrapped her right arm in the crook of her left, pushed out her mouth and started to hum. Another said, 'Naw, Helen, you ain't standing like her. This here's it.' The she lifted her chest, folded her arms and mocked that strange carriage that was Annie Henderson. Another laughed, 'Naw, you can't do it. Your mouth ain't pooched out enough. It's like this.' (30-31)

Maya suffered and felt humiliated when she observed all these irritating scenes from the inside store. She wanted to deal with the white girls, but she was taught to remain silent and not to create any chaos with the whites. The white kids attempt to use their race as an instrument of power whereas, the coloured women attempt to practice the course of

silence. The Society is solely responsible for creating such demeaning attitude that the coloured are always inferior to the whites in all aspects.

The Powhitetrash girls waved good-bye and left the store because they found that there is no use of irritating Momma. Maya got angry when Momma replied good-bye to them with proper salutation:

“Bye, Miz Helen, ‘bye, Miz Ruth,’bye, Miz Eloise.” I burst. A firecracker July-the-Fourth burst. How could Momma call them Miz? The mean nasty things. Why couldn’t she have come inside the sweet, cool store when we saw them breasting the hill? What did she prove? And then if they were dirty, mean and impudent, why did Momma have to call them Miz? (32-33)

Maya found that Momma has achieved something. When there is no effective reaction for segregation and racism, then definitely the practice of racial discrimination would be stopped. Maya understood that the power of passive resistance is the great way to escape from the racial troubles.

Few years before the arrival of Maya and Bailey, a man was hunt down for assaulting a white woman. In order to escape, he ran into Momma’s store and took shelter under the care of Momma and Uncle Willie. They safely bid him farewell on his way. Unfortunately, the police caught him and apprehended him in court. During the enquiry session he revealed the truth that, he took refuge in Mrs. Henderson’s store, after the crime. When Momma process in front of the court and acclaimed herself as Mrs. Henderson “The judge, the bailiff and other whites in the audience laughed. The judge had really made a gaffe calling a Negro women Mrs.,” (48). It proves that the white people were not ready to indicate a Negro woman with formal salutations. The judge

could not accept the fact that a woman who owned a store in Arkansas would turn out to be a coloured. “The whites tickled their funny bones with the incident for a long time and the Negroes thought it proved the worth and majesty of my grandmother.” (48). This incident also points out the double oppression imposed by the white judge who saw Momma as Negro first and then as a woman.

Again, the children moved to live with their mother Vivian Baxter’s house at St. Louis. In St. Louis, they met their mother’s boy friend Mr. Freeman. The kids lived along with him. As an eight years old child Maya could not recognize Freeman’s intention on her. When he tried to harass her by holding her tight in his arms, she saw him as a fatherly figure. She felt at home in his arms. She thought that he would not let anything bad will ever happen to her. As a young girl who did not sense, the care of her father’s care at last she felt happy by thinking Mr. Freeman as a lovable father. But Maya was brutally raped by Mr. Freeman. His savage self became known when he threatened her during the molestation ““If you scream, I’m gonna kill you. And if you tell, I’m gonna kill Bailey.”” (78). Her sense are torn apart during the act of rape. The eight year old body could not bear the pain and resist the civilized ape’s violence on her.

Maya has fallen sick because of her unspeakable fear. In hospital, they discovered that someone raped her. When Bailey enquired Maya about the man who disgraced her, she tore out the mask of Mr. Freeman. By hearing this, the family become furious and wanted to punish that rapist legally. In the court, Maya was in a situation to answer all the questions raised by Mr. Freeman’s lawyer, to prove herself as an innocent victim and him as an accused. Justice won when they identified and punished the criminal. Even though, he was sealed as an accused and sentenced imprisonment, he was released by his lawyer with the loops existed in law. He tried to cheat the law and justice, but destiny gave him final judgment called murder. Suddenly, Mr. Freeman was found murdered,

most of them suspected Maya's family. After his death, Maya was haunted with guilt and stopped talking with everyone except her brother Bailey. Everyone thought that post-rape trauma changed Maya's behaviour. Therefore, they sent her to Stamps from St. Louis with Bailey.

Angelou's first confrontation with a white woman made her to understand the social reality. In the past, the whites denoted the coloured people as "niggers, jigs, dinges, blackbirds, crows and spooks." (109). Later the whites started to change the name of the servants as per their convenience. Maya worked in Mrs. Viola Cullinan's house for few days at the age of eleven. Mrs. Viola Cullinan is a wealthy Southern white woman whom neither custom nor tradition taught to be kind with a Black American. As per American racism, they always try to set limitations and suppress a Black person's identity. Mrs. Cullinan attempts this by addressing Maya in the name of her convenience and refuses to call her proper name. Mrs. Cullinan's friends advised her "the name's too long. I'd never bother myself. I'd call her Mary if I was you" (107) just because the name Mary seems to be shorter than Marguerite.

"Mary?" Miss Glory asked, "Who?" Mrs. Cullinan, sagging a little, knew and I knew. "I want Mary to go down to Mrs. Randall's and take her some soup. She's not been feeling well for a few days." Miss Glory's face was a wonder to see. "You mean Margaret, ma'am. Her name's Margaret." "That's too long She's Mary from now on. (108-109)

When Maya could not resist the name change, Miss Glory admits, "My name used to be Hallelujah. That's what Ma named me, but my mistress give me 'Glory', and it stuck" (109). Glory's acceptance of Mrs. Cullinan's racist attitude contrasted with Maya's

resistance. Glory enjoys the new name since it is short. Even though the Black girl victimized of the attack, she does not realize it, as an insult. Glory seems to accept the fact that Black people are under the control of whites. Though Mrs. Cullinan renamed Glory, Glory accepts it. Angelou was not ready to be glad about treated like an object, which could given in new name whenever its owner finds it pleased. She also pitied her fellow maid, and conveyed her inner feelings by using an angry tone of writing. Changing one's own birth name shows their superiority and bossy nature towards their employees. Erasing the racist attitude from the minds of the white people was the complicated issue.

Angelou brings out another incident of racial discrimination in the novel. Using any materials or dishes used by the white family members in the working place is strictly prohibited. The two coloured maids have separate glasses and dishes kept in separate shelves. "I had a glass to drink from, and it sat with Miss Glory's on a separate shelf from the others." (106). Maya exposes her instinct of hesitation for a new name by breaking several pieces of Mrs. Cullinan's heirloom china dishes with extreme anger. After scolding her with few discriminatory names, at last Mrs. Cullinan called Maya by her correct name, but mispronounced as Margaret.

On a Saturday evening, Bailey did not return home. Fear started to grow like thorns in each one's heart. It is not safe for coloured people to roam around at night in America. "Any break from routine may herald for them unbearable news. For this reason, Southern Blacks until the present generation could be counted among America's arch conservatives." (114). The safety and security of a coloured citizen remained a big question mark in the society of the United States.

Momma's customers came to listen to the radio show, which broadcast the World Champion Boxing Match between Joe Louis a coloured and Carnera, a white man. Joe Louis is a coloured man whom the coloured community expected to win. Everyone felt that Joe Louis is fighting for his or her rights and dignity. They were so nervous about his victory. All aimed his victory as a healing medicine for their tragic incidents that happened in their life. When he was beaten too hard, they lost hope. They remembered how many suffered because of racial discrimination and violence.

My race groaned. It was our people falling. It was another lynching, yet another Black man hanging on a tree. One more woman ambushed and raped. A Black boy whipped and maimed. It was hounds on the trail of a man running through slimy swamps. It was a white woman slapping her maid for being forgetful. (135)

The customers were broken and lost hope, when he was continuously blown up by the white boxer. They started to feel inferior about their own coloured race that they were hated by all and fit for nothing:

The men in the Store stood away from the walls and at attention. Women greedily clutched the babes on their laps while on the porch the shuffling and smiles, flirting and pinching of a few minutes before we gone. This might be the end of the world. If Joe lost we were back in slavery and beyond help. It would all be true, the accusations that we were lower types of human beings. Only a little higher than the apes. True that we were stupid and ugly and lazy and dirty and, unlucky and worst of all, that God

Himself hated us and ordained us to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, forever and ever, world without end. (135)

In the eleventh hour, Joe Louis knocked him down with heavy iron like punches and made him to bleed. He won the match and the coloured people took pride as if their family member hit the trophy. They felt some unknown peace within themselves. They celebrated the victory by eating and drinking. People who came from long distance arranged to stay in town, because it is not safe for a black man or his family to be caught by white folks at night. "It wouldn't do for a Black man and his family to be caught on a lonely country road on a night when Joe Louis had proved that we were the strongest people in the world." (136). The coloured scared about losing the match, because it will bring shame to the whole community and the Americans will definitely decry them. Even after Joe's victory, they frightened whether the white may take revenge on them.

On Maya's eighth grade graduation day, Mr. Edward Donleavy a white chief guest had given his racist speech. He openly gave his statement that, the African Americans are unable to take a position of a scientist or any other noble profession. They are fit to be athletes and boxes. "The white kids were going to have a chance to become Galileos and Madame Curies and Edisons and Gauguins, and our boys (the girls weren't even in on it) would try to be Jesse Owens and Joe Louises." (179). The coloured were intentionally controlled, so the white children get benefit out of getting education. It enraged the coloured Americans over there, but they could not do anything. Since they were under the white people, they could not stand against these words. Their disability created hatred among themselves that they are brought up and trained to remain submissive under the control of whites.

Once Maya suffered from severe toothache due to cavities, Momma took her to Lincoln a white Dentist. They believed that Dentist Lincoln would treat Maya because Momma helped him during his hard times. They were completely humiliated by the dentist's policy "Annie, you know I don't treat nigra, colored people. . . . Annie, everybody has a policy. In this world you have to have a policy. Now, my policy is I don't treat colored people." (188).

When Dentist Lincoln was in financial crisis even to lose his building Momma lent him money and helped to restart his life. He persuaded her to move on because he repaid all her money on time, so no use of speaking about that. When Momma reminded him how he struggled to come up, he insulted her that "Annie, my policy is I'd rather stick my hand in a dog's mouth than in a nigger's." (189). This revealed the cruel racist mindset of dentist Lincoln. According to him, the coloured Americans are inferior creatures than dogs. Momma thought that it is dangerous for a child to see all these discrimination. So she asked Maya to wait outside the room.

When Bailey was sent on a small work to white folk's town, he came back with a great shock. He could not understand why the whites hate the coloured people. He found a dead coloured man thrown into the pond. The White man who stood over there ordered Bailey and the other coloured men to move the dead corpse into the calaboose. So these Black men along with Bailey obeyed the order of the white man and carried the carcass inside the calaboose. When they came out they tried to play a game by locking the door and blamed them for the man's death. Later they were unlocked. When they left the dead man inside, the prisoners screamed that "they didn't want no dead nigger in there with them. That he'd stink up the place. They called the white man "Boss". They said, "Boss, surely we ain't done anything bad enough for you to put another nigger in here with us, and a dead one at that" (198). Through the incident it came to know that a white

man could play in a coloured American's life, however he wants. Momma was worried about the terrific situation of racial discrimination going around them, so she packed these children again to their mother in San Francisco.

Racism was a serious issue in the city of San Francisco. "A story went the rounds about a San Franciscan white matron who refused to sit beside a Negro civilian on the streetcar, even after he made room for her on the seat. Her explanation was that she would not sit beside a draft dodger who was a Negro as well." (214). There the children once again lived along with their mother and their step father Daddy Clidell. Vivian Baxter neglected Maya's desire to become a streetcar conductor. She advised her that no one in the world would hire a coloured woman as a conductor. "' They don't accept coloured people on the streetcars.'" (266). These types of jobs were restricted only for white people. In the job application form, Maya mentioned that she was a former driver for Mrs. Annie Henderson, a white lady in Stamps, Arkansas. When the white secretary of the San Francisco street-car company constantly irritated her efforts for this job's interview, Maya was at first prepared not to take it personally. Then she was hired as "the first Negro on the San Francisco streetcars." (270).

Maya received this job because of the experience that she mentioned in the application, if not she would not received the post of the streetcar conductor. As a Black American, they hardly had opportunities to get a decent job. Even though they are intellectual, they are rejected just because of their race. At George Washington High School, Maya felt like a fish out of water. Therefore, she began to bunk classes and roam around the Golden Gate Park or wander in Emporium Department Store. When Vivian discovered her playing truant, she advised her daughter Maya to stay at home and said, "she didn't want some white woman calling her up to tell her something about her child that she didn't know. And she didn't want to be put in the position of lying to a white

woman” (272). This warning put an end to Maya’s truancy. The situation also explains that how the coloured Americans maintained their distance from the whites. They did not want to be blamed unnecessarily by them. They did not prefer to lose their self-respect and dignity in front of the white people.

The narrator’s youth and full freedom threatened her about the future. It pressured her like walking on a tightrope from one edge to another. Maya was confused whether she is normal or a lesbian because of her underdeveloped growth in her body and optimistic view about that issue. In order to clarify her doubt, she had a sexual intercourse with a boy from her neighbourhood. Three weeks later, Maya found that she is pregnant and this relieved her that she is not a lesbian. At the same time, Maya hid her pregnancy from the entire family excluding Bailey. After receiving her diploma, she exposed her secret to the whole family. No other go, the family accepted her and the baby. The volume of autobiography ended with the birth of a boy baby.

Racial discrimination played a major violent role throughout the journey of the novel right from the opening until the end. The whole novel depicted the critical survival of black people in the stone hearted or heartless white society. The Whites tortured the blacks in the name of race. Not only black women but also black men were the victims of racial discrimination. All these hindrances and struggles taught the audience the imbalance of the coloured women in the white society.

CHAPTER THREE

OMNIPOTENCE OF EDUCATION

Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* shows how Angelou a prominent black autobiographer is struggling for her identity as an individual. As a black woman Angelou confronted racism, sexism, classism and gender issues through that she become capable enough to find her identity and stood against the oppression which not only her but the entire black community came across. Angelou's dealing with the difficult situations became an inspiration for black women to stand against the maltreatment based on colour, construct their individual identity and find their sense of belongingness. Through her struggle, Angelou is trying to unchain the black women who were chained by the burdens of slavery. She reveals her identity as a writer and felt that black is beautiful.

Angelou's autobiographies reveal her life experiences, which actually became a source of positivity and give valuable meaning to the life of entire black women community. Marcia Ann Gillespie a racial and gender justice activist commented on Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*,

During the months she spent writing the book, [Angelou] practically withdrew from the world. She'd set the bar high. Her ambition was to write a book that would honor the Black experience and affirm the 'human spirit.' She more than achieved her goal. She wrote a coming-of-age story that has become a modern classic." (2008)

The autobiographical novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* focuses on the belongingness and quest for self-identity of Maya Angelou. Maya Angelou originally named as Margaret Johnson who is commonly known as Maya. Angelou is an Afro American writer. Her brother Bailey as a shortened version of My Sister called her Maya. Angelou was three years old when her parents had decided to put an end to their calamitous marriage and shipped the children to their paternal grandmother Mrs. Annie Henderson.

Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* finds the child Maya crisscrossing the United States from place to place with no permanent place of home and identity. Maya's literary journey begins with a literal journey as she travels from California to her Grandmother Henderson's home in Stamps, Arkansas. Maya at the age of three sent to her grandmother's house accompanied with her four years old brother Bailey in the town Stamps Arkansas. From this point onwards, she was feeling dislocated and questioning to herself that, what her identity is and to whom she belongs. From the beginning to the end she keeps on moving from one place to another finding her identity. In order to get satisfactory answers she roams from one place to another and tries to establish her own identity. After her parents separation she was living with her Grandmother Momma and Uncle Willie. Maya's grandmother was a religious and economically independent woman with a larger than life presence. Maya calls her as Momma.

Maya grew up in Stamps, Arkansas, where she lived from the age of three with her paternal grandmother who ran a general store in town. It is here Maya gained practical knowledge in making change, filling orders, and measuring dry goods for customers. Maya's formal education at the Lafayette County Training School grew in her

a love of literature. Maya's first love is William Shakespeare despite the fact that she knew her grandmother would disapprove of his whiteness.

During these years in Stamps, I met and fell in love with William Shakespeare. He was my first love. Although I enjoyed and respected Kipling, Poe, Butler, Thackeray and Henley, I saved my young and loyal passion for Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson and W.E.B. Du Bois' "Litany at Atlanta." (13-14).

Maya's childhood was spent in Stamps except for a brief period when she was sent along with her brother Bailey to live with her mother in St. Louis. In St. Louis she was living along with her brother Bailey, her mother and her boyfriend Mr. Freeman. Her mother owns that house. She often questions to herself what her identity was. Maya's childhood does not seem believable. The novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* manages to capture the simplicity of a child's thought processes while still reflecting her genuine giftedness. Maya's experiences in a larger St. Louis school serve as a testament to the quality of education which she received in Stamps. Maya's knowledge came from her own endeavours in reading and working outside of school. At the age of seven, Maya living with her mother in St. Louis enrolls herself in the Toussaint L'Ouverture Grammar School. Their schoolmates ignored Maya and her brother just because they have advanced math skills. The teachers in the school moved Maya and Bailey to upper grade after seeing their extraordinary skills.

The students, however, were shockingly backward. Bailey and I did arithmetic at a mature level because of our work in the Store, and we read well because in Stamps there wasn't anything else to do. We were moved

up a grade because our teachers thought that we country children would make our classmates feel inferior – and we did. (63).

Maya finds refuge in fiction, poetry, and language itself. The novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is in many ways an account of how Maya Angelou came to be a poet, and her love of language plays a central role. Throughout her life, education through literature plays a significant role in bolstering her confidence and providing a world of fantasy and escape. When feeling isolated in St. Louis, she takes shelter in the library. Maya gets her first library card in St. Louis and spends many weekends there reading. Books provide an escape from the unfairness of everyday life that Maya experiences as a young black girl in the South, cultivating an active imagination in her and a penchant for creating and controlling her own inventive narratives.

Maya's mother Vivian lives a wild life working in gambling parlours. One morning Vivian's boyfriend, Mr. Freeman, sexually molests Maya, and he later rapes her. They go to court and afterward Mr. Freeman is violently murdered, probably by some of the underground criminal associates of Maya's family. In the aftermath of these events, Maya endures the guilt and shame of being sexually abused. She also believes that she bears the responsibility for Mr. Freeman's death because she denied in court that he had molested her, prior to the rape and remains silent. Maya chooses not to speak after her rape because she is afraid of the destructive power of words.

The only thing I could do was to stop talking to people other than Bailey.... if I talked to anyone else that person might die too. Just my breath, carrying my words out, might poison people and they'd curl up and die like the black fat slugs that only pretended. I had to stop talking. (87)

Maya and Bailey return to Stamps to live with Momma after the great disaster that happened to Maya. Momma manages to break through Maya's silence by introducing her to Mr. Bertha Flower, a kind, educated woman who tells Maya read works of literature aloud. Mrs. Flowers, by introducing her to classic literature and poetry, teaches her about the positive power of language and empowers Maya to speak again. Mrs. Flower explains the importance of language and communication to Maya,

“Now no one is going to make you talk – possibly no one can. But bear in mind, language is man's way of communicating with his fellow man and it is language alone which separates him from the lower animals.”... Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with the shades of deeper meaning. (98)

Through Mrs. Flower, Maya learns the importance of education in the life of every human being. Flower says that not only school provides education but also the sufferings undergone by everyone in their everyday life would educate them. Mrs. Flower plays a significant role in Maya's life. She is the person who kindles the means of education in Maya. Through the fire, which was lit by Mr. Flower, Maya finds her identity in literature.

“She said that I must always be intolerant of ignorance but understanding of illiteracy. That some people, unable to go to school, were more educated and even more intelligent than college professors. She encouraged me to listen carefully to what country people called mother wit.” (99).

In Afro America, rape was not considered a crime. Instead it was very common among them. A black lady by the name Mrs. Flowers helped Maya to recover from the shock of sexual assault. Maya embraced her life and started reading literature and poetry. As a result, Maya regained her voice and identified the feebleness and strength of her community and eventually she broke her silence and started living her life fully by gaining the spiritual strength. By developing her interest in reading literature, she gained her identity. Maya was not only the victim of rape but also she confronted racism, sexism, classicism being black. But she faced every difficulty with strength.

Maya as a black woman was not allowed to be a conductor but she crossed all barriers and became the first female conductor. She reconstructed her identity by accepting all the challenges, overcame difficult situations, and made the world realize her individual identity. Maya was even named with different names as a white woman once called her Mary and her mother's boy friend called her Ritie. This made Angelou very furious because it was a question about her identity. Secondly, When her classmate said that blacks are meant to work only as servants insulted her. When Angelou suffered from toothache, her grandmother took her to the doctor and the doctor denied treating her because she was black. The series of incidents that took place in Angelou's life actually brought catastrophe in Angelou's life. Just being black, she has gone through a series of identity crisis and finding her belongingness.

At the age of thirteen Maya was sent to her mother and she felt like home. Then she went to her father's house in summer to live along with him but the hostile behaviour of her father's girlfriend Dolores forced her to leave to house and she escaped herself from her and lives with homeless junkyard for a month. One day, while reading a lesbian novel, she became curious to know about her own sexuality or her individual self. Who is she? A lesbian or heterosexual. She went to her neighbourhood and offered him to have

sex with him. Consequently, she became pregnant. She hides her pregnancy for eight months and takes her graduation degree from high school. Later, she reveals her pregnancy.

Initially Maya's father was filled with anger but eventually he accepted her. All these things were quite difficult for Maya to bear. When Maya had her newborn baby, she accepted her as a young black mother and felt confident to move her life as a young black mother. Although Maya's childhood was spent in frustration and disillusionment, she embraced all difficulties fighting and standing for her self-identity. She has not only defined her childhood but also her Self. Her adult voice in her work actually reflects a child's voice and experiences of oppression and embracing and emerging. From the beginning onwards Maya prepares one to witness her childhood which is full of insults as a black child, girl, mother and woman. Maya's experiences and her grandmother's store describe not only the kind of Maya life but also the condition of Black Women. Through her experiences, Maya voices forth the condition of entire black community and their sufferings during 1930s.

Maya's narrative shows that she was not just reading. Her various references to novels when describing people and places indicates her engagement with the classics even as a young girl. Maya compares a woman in her town, Mrs. Bertha Flowers, to "women in English novels who walked the moors (whatever they were) with their loyal dogs rating at a respectful distance." (95). The description brings one to mind the landscape of Emily Bronte's novel, *Wuthering Heights*. One of Maya's best friends, Louise, reminds her of Jane Eyre, the heroine of Charlotte Bronte's novel which Angelou mentions reading more than once over the course of the novel. Other literary influences show Angelou's desire to have control in her life, which motivates her to emulate male

heroes. She wishes to be like the main characters in Horatio Alger's rags-to-riches stories, who "were always good, always won, and were always boys" (75). The comics in the Sunday paper were also influential, as Angelou "admired the strong heroes who always conquered in the end," like Tiny Tim (76). Her veneration for these characters prompts her to read more about them and reflects a personal need to feel powerful.

Maya describes Mrs. Bertha Flowers as a woman pictured in English novels. Mrs. Flowers helps Maya rediscover her voice after her rape by encouraging her to use the words of other writers and poets. Maya continually quotes and refers to the literature she read throughout her childhood. For instance, at one point she simply gives San Francisco the title *Pride and Prejudice* without referring specifically to Jane Austen's novel of the same name. Bailey appreciates Maya's love of literature. He often presents her with gifts, such as the book of Edgar Allan Poe's work that he and Maya read aloud while walking in their backyard in Stamps. "He was as proud of the gift as I. It was a soft-leather-bound copy of a collection of poems by Edgar Allan Poe, or, as Bailey and I called him, 'Eap.'" I turned to "Annabel Lee" and we walked down the garden rows, the cool dirt between our toes, reciting the beautifully sad lines." (175).

Angelou attended school while segregation was still legal, and her personal narrative recounts the significance of her childhood education from 1933 into the mid-1940s. Her recollections threaded with the importance of literacy and learning to dealing with her traumatic rape when she was eight years old and her recovery from that abuse. Angelou's narrative aligns emotionally with many scholars who write about the effects of child abuse, but her narrative of recovery differs in its methods, as Angelou did not have access to prescribed and monitored treatment. As she responds to trauma by ceasing to

speak, her version of therapy utilizes her love of literature to help her regain confidence in the power of her personal voice.

The novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* nearly serves as an allegory for Angelou's traumatic experiences. It has been told endlessly that she will never have full control of her life in a racist world and shown physically that her control over her own body is limited. Angelou finds redemptive power in words, more specifically in literature. Words become her lifeblood, her way of wrangling experience and putting it in its place; words become her way of controlling what seemingly uncontrolled.

Angelou's trauma and recovery narratives are distinctive in their reliance on literacy as both a coping mechanism and form of therapy. Her imagination, developed through escaping reality in literature. This allows her to disassociate from her abuse as it happens and serves as a tool for recovery, helping to reestablish her sense of self. Her search for control and power leads her back to the literature she had read for years and the imaginative narratives she creates for herself, longing to be like the male heroes her imagination painted clearly. She only needed to realize that she already possessed these qualities, character traits that would lead her to become a civil rights activist, speaking not only for her own rights but for her entire race. At the end of Angelou's eighth grade graduation, as her classmate sings "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" by James Weldon Johnson, Angelou feels redeemed. After Mr. Edward Donleavy had essentially discounted the academic work done at the Lafayette County Training School and made the entire audience feel downtrodden, the poem, adapted into song, helped them feel connected and hopeful again: "We were on top again. As always, again. We survived. The depths and been icy and dark, but now a bright sun spoke to our souls. I was no

longer simply a member of the proud graduating class of 1940; I was a proud member of the wonderful, beautiful Negro race” (184).

Angelou was a victim of oppression and had lost her identity right from her childhood. Being dislocated it was very difficult for Angelou to gain confidence. Moreover, Maya was a black woman in the world of whites, which increased her difficulties and became the reason of her low self-esteem. Angelou suffered being black and in particular being a black woman. In order to come out of this thought she used writing as tool. She delivered a message before dividing into sex, gender and colour we all are humans and by bringing and doing discrimination on the basis of colour we are actually ending the humanity. Henceforth her autobiographies are not only seeking the identity but also love for black womanhood. She started writing her life histories, which taught the world about human equality. She delivers a message saying that division in the name of sex, gender and colour brings total discrimination and ultimate end to humanity.

Angelou’s autobiographical novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* portrays the different incidents in Maya’s life that affected her and helped her to understand and liberate herself from the shackles of the prejudicial society. Maya’s rape, subsequent muteness, her interaction with Mrs. Bertha Flowers, mocking powhitetrash girls, her visit to the dentist, Maya’s month living in a Junkyard, her struggle to become a San Francisco street car conductor, doubt about her sex, her graduation, and accepting motherhood were the incidents that shaped her personality and paved the path to understand life. Throughout the novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, she admits her true self. Women writers do not dare talk about their marginalized lives and conditions through central characters until the mid-twentieth century, but Maya Angelou dared to take the stories to public notice. The power of her pen is the ultimate product of Maya’s

personality. Maya is no longer ashamed of her race or sex; instead, she is proud and gains confidence as a Negro female writer. Her struggle and triumph over prejudices and barriers like racism, sexism, personal desolation, lowliness and low self-image of herself, illuminate her strength and beauty.

Maya Angelou's thought-provoking autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* opens the doors to the readers to enter into her private world and gives them an insight into the failures and triumphs of her life. In her novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, writer Maya Angelou exposes the despair, pain, loneliness and the perpetual sufferings of her life in particular and her race in general as the members of the black community. She vividly narrates her experiences in various situations and to a wide variety of people. The title of the book suggests that inspite of her caged status, she sings in the cage. In other words, she wants to make it a point that in the final analysis she comes to terms with life and learns to take things as they are. In the latter part of the novel, it is understood that even though she is restricted by circumstances as a bird is in the cage, she takes things for granted and finds joy in her setting or situations by changing her perception and attitude towards various situations. All because of her unprivileged birth and upbringing as a black woman victimize her. She learns to forgive her exploiters and tries to live a normal life. Her story speaks volumes about her unflinching faith in her identity and her strong appetite for the ultimate amidst the bitter realities in life.

Maya finally finds her identity as a writer through the means of education that she experienced from her life and the incidences that she overcomes by literature. Mrs. Flowers plays a major role in Maya's life to educate her with the spirit of literature through her words. Though Maya find herself caged with ignorance, racial discrimination, gender discrimination and sexual harassment she does not remain in the

cage accepting all those burdens. Instead, she sings her own experience through her autobiographical novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* to bring change in the minds of people who are still undergoes suffering by remaining in their cage. Her life experiences teach the value of education, patience and hope which can stand against the pains of life. Angelou's autobiographical novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* also delivers a message that one should stand for one's own identity.

CHAPTER FOUR

NARRATIVE STYLE AND LITERARY TECHNIQUES

Maya Angelou's novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is in the style of an autobiographical novel. Angelou's friend, author James Baldwin and her editor, Robert Loomis, challenged her to write an autobiography, which is also a piece of literature. Angelou uses many stylistic devices to enhance the retelling of her life. Reviewers often categorize the novel as an autobiographical fiction because Angelou uses thematic development and other techniques such as dialogue and characterisation. However, prevailing critical view characterizes it as an autobiography, a genre she attempts to comment on, change and expand. The novel is in the form of first person narrative and tells the story of Angelou's life in chronological order. The critic Lupton's comment on Angelou's literary style in her critical writing *Maya Angelou: A Critical Companion* that "the writing techniques Angelou uses in her autobiographies are the same devices used in writing fiction: vividly conceived characters and careful development of theme, setting, plot and language" (30).

Angelou's in-depth presentation of incidents with all details and her careful choice of narrative techniques show her mastery and craftsmanship as a writer. The novel shows the merits of the following literary techniques to highlight the dominant subjects in her narrative: humour, figurative language, the serial autobiography technique, name changes, among others like the blend of the first person narrative technique and dialogue. It displays Angelou's deep mastery over her craft as a writer and confirms that she was successful in exploring these techniques to drive home her message to her reading audience. One of the main devices she uses is dialect in order to let the reader understand how people spoke during the time and in this particular region. Angelou in her 1989

interview stated, “I think I am the only serious writer who has chosen the autobiographical form to carry my work, my expression.” (Lupton, p.30)

Angelou uses literary techniques such as first person narrative right from the beginning of this autobiographical novel. The first person narrative used in the novel helps the novel to come under the genre ‘autobiographical novel’. Angelou introduces a unique point of view in American autobiography by revealing her life story through a narrator Maya who is a Black female from the South, at some points a child and other point a mother. The following lines from the novel illustrates the technique where Maya and her brother Bailey were sent to their grandmother’s house in Stamps, Arkansas all alone in a train tagged with their names on their wrist just like animals,

WHEN I was three and Bailey four, we had arrived in the musty little town, wearing tags on our wrists which instructed—“To Whom It May Concern”—that we were Marguerite and Bailey Johnson Jr., from Long Beach California, enroute to Stamps, Arkansas, c/o Mrs. Annie Henderson.(5)

The setting of the novel also plays a major role. Angelou sets the novel in both north and south sides of America. It helps the readers to compare and contrast the sufferings of the coloured people in different places. Maya’s experiences growing up with constant transitions with the family members and different regions of the country. Most of her childhood and upbringings takes place in Stamps, Arkansas. She learns about culture, religion, more specifically the intricacies of being Black in the South along with her Momma, Bailey and Uncle Willie. Maya’s life in the North, St. Louis is a different experience of life in a different angle. She lives her life with her Mother, Mother’s boyfriend Mr. Freeman and Bailey. This is the most important turn in the life of Maya

where she is raped by her mother's boy friend. There he learns life lessons and her life takes a great twist.

Angelou differentiates the setting by bringing up the differences Maya encounters by her living in both north and south side of the country. The most significant aspect about the point of view in this narrative is the presence of the narrator and the closeness she has, to the situations she faces. She highlights the variation in the people of different sides in the country through her experience. She points out an incident with the rude teachers and students in St. Louis,

The teachers were more formal than those we knew in Stamps, and although they didn't whip their students with switches, they gave them licks in the palms of their hands with rulers. In Stamps teachers were much friendlier, but that was because they were imported from the Arkansas Negro colleges, and since we had no hotels or rooming houses in town, they had to live with private families.... St. Louis teachers, on the other hand, tended to act very siditty and talked down to their students from the lofty heights of education and whitefolks' enunciation. (64)

Angelou writes differently than most authors. She makes her stand out as an autobiographer. She leaves a lot of room for imagination and free thoughts. Angelou is very smart with the way she chooses to write the book. She is well known for her descriptive style. Angelou's most valued technique as a stylist is the precision. She describes objects and places; a precision so sharp that the readers carry the description with them, even after reading is finished.

Angelou's observations are sensual and keen to the essences of smell, sound and sight. Her writing resembles a series of photographs or fragments of music, snapshots

taken from many angles, noted played from a variety of instruments. One such example is the description of Momma lighting the lamplight in the Store. She describes,

“she called our names and issued orders, and pushed her large feet into homemade slippers and across the bare lye-washed wooden floor to light the coal-oil-lamp.

The lamplight in the Store gave a soft make-believe feeling to our world which made me want to whisper and walk about on tiptoe. The odors of onions and oranges and kerosene had been mixing all night and wouldn't be disturbed until the wooded slat was removed from the door and the early morning air forced its way in with the bodies of people who had walked miles to reach the pickup place.(7)

This descriptive style can be seen throughout the novel. One such description evidence can be witnessed in the description of the opening of Momma's Store in the morning “The Store was my favorite place to be. Alone and empty in the mornings, it looked like an unopened present from a stranger. Opening the front doors was pulling the ribbon off the unexpected gift.” (16)

Angelou uses the stream of conscious technique where she waited for her grandmother Mrs. Henderson. She also thought that, the passive resistance would not work out in this situation. Hence Momma confronted with the white dentist:

I didn't ask you to apologize in front of Marguerite, because I don't want her to know my power, but I order you, now and herewith. Leave Stamps by sundown. “Mrs. Henderson, I can't get my equipment...” He was shaking terribly now. “Now, that brings me to my second order. You will

never again practice dentistry. Never! When you get settled in your next place, you will be a vegetarian caring for dogs with the mange, cats with the cholera and cows with the epizootic. Is that clear?" The saliva ran down his chin and his eyes filled with tears. "Yes, ma'am. Thank you for not killing me. Thank you, Mrs. Henderson." (190)

The above-mentioned incident happened in the imagination of the writer and the protagonist Maya. In reality, it did not happen. Momma's confrontation was not violent like Maya's imagination. She collected the interest for money, which she lent him before.

The next literary technique Angelou successfully uses to develop her themes in her autobiographies is her vivid use of symbols and figurative language. Angelou develops the image of an angry personality. This is explained with the incident where Angelou, upon hearing the racist graduation speech imagined a pyramid of flesh with the white folks on the bottom, as the broad base, then the Negroes with their mops, recipes, cotton sacks and Spirituals sticking out of their moths. The image of violation is also introduced into the narrative with the rape of Angelou. The image of the violation is closely tied to that of pain.

Angelou presents the picture of the breaking, tearing and entering even when the senses torn apart. Angelou makes use of simile, metaphor and personification to develop her subjects of childhood, adultery, motherhood and literacy. Angelou uses the following figurative language to give further meaning to her message in her novel. In the area of similes, some few illustrations were explained. She uses simile in the following expressions My mother "was like a pretty kite that floated just above my head. If I liked I could pull it in to me by saying I had to go to the toilet or by starting a fight with Bailey." (65)

Angelou uses expression again in “For nearly a year, I sobbed around the house, the store, the school and the church, like an old biscuit, dirty and inedible.” (77). The above expressions, among several others, add beauty and colour to Angelou’s autobiographical novel. They add beauty and enforce her power of creating mental picture in the mind’s eye of her readers. In expressing her fondness and admiration for some women-figures like grand Momma Henderson, or her biological mother Vivian Baxter Johnson, or even Mrs. Flowers, Angelou likens herself to them choosing their admirable qualities. These comparisons help in her development of the subjects of motherhood.

Aside, Angelou also uses figurative forms of languages in the area of metaphors. For example, she writes, “Mother was a blithe chick nuzzling around the large, solid dark hen. The sounds they made had a rich inner harmony.” (126). In another incident, Angelou writes “Momma’s deep, slow voice lay under my mother’s rapid peeps and chirps.” (171). Another illustration of metaphor is realized when Angelou writes; “I hefted the burden of pregnancy at sixteen onto my own shoulders where it belonged. Admittedly, I staggered under the weight.” (242). The subject of motherhood is further enforced by these mental pictures she creates.

Personification is another feature of imagery that Angelou explores to add colour and beauty to her narratives and helps to develop the subjects of motherhood and marriage. She uses the expressions: “The Depression must have its [toll] on the white section of Stamps with cyclonic impact, but it seeped into the Black area slowly, like a thief with misgivings.” (41). There is also another example of personification in the expression; “After a minute or two, silence would rush into the room from its hiding place because I had eaten up all the sounds.” (73). There is a lot more aspects of figurative language used in the novel that together help Angelou to better drive home her message

to the readers. It is important to note that there are several other instances of personification and other forms of imagery that Angelou uses in her in the narratives that all help Angelou to further deepen the pictures that she hopes to send to her readers.

Angelou's language is frightening at times, as in the camel metaphor used when she writes about the rape she suffered from her mother's boyfriend Mr. Freeman in St. Louis. She describes the horrible violation with reference to a biblical passage, "The act of rape on an eight year old body is matter of the needle giving because the camel can't. The child gives because the body can, and the mind of the violator can't." (78). The biblical language and reference connects this horrifying episode to a spiritual text revival which she attended in Stamps. She relates, "Hadn't He Himself said it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter heaven?" (92). This connection seems impossibly contradictory. One act is of violation and oppression that results in Mr. Freeman's death and five years of fearful silence for Maya. The other act involves redemption and affirmation of life everlasting.

Angelou uses vicious language as in the white dentist's remark that he would "rather stick his hand in a dog's mouth than in a nigger's" (189). Angelou's use of tabooed and inhuman word Nigger is meant to emphasise the clash between the dentist's presumed profession as healer and the low nature of his language and attitude. Yet another feature of her style, evident in the same dentist's statement about the dog's mouth is the use of sharp and direct dialogue to convey the distinctive language of a character. Dialogue is a stylistic feature throughout Angelou's entire autobiographical series. It seems most dynamic though in the novel because of the string of wild-speaking characters like Sister Monroe and Mrs. Cullinan.

Various episodes that form the structure of *Caged Bird* constructed much like short stories and their arrangement throughout the book does not always follow strict chronology. One of the most important early episodes in the novel comes much earlier in the book than it actually did in Angelou's life. The scene where the powhitetrash girls taut Maya's grandmother takes up the book's fifth chapter, but it occurred when Maya was about ten year old, two years after Mr. Freeman rapes her, which occurs in the twelfth chapter. Situating the episode early in the book makes sense in the context of the previous chapters; the third chapter ends with Angelou describing her anger at the used-to-be-sheriff who warned her family of an impending Klan ride and the fourth chapter end with her meditation on her early inability to perceive white people as human.

The scene with the powhitetrash girls follow this indicating how non-human white people can be. But if that was all that motivated the organization of her episodes, Angelou could easily have followed the meditation on white people's non-humanity with the episode where Maya breaks the china cup of her white employer, Mrs. Cullinan. What really organises chapters three through five is that Angelou presents the futility of indignation and the utility of subtle resistance as ways of responding to racism. The humiliation and anger Maya feels in the scene with the ex-sheriff is well reflected in the language she uses to describe it:

If on Judgement Day, I were summoned by St. Peter to give testimony to the used-to-be-sheriff's act of kindness, I would be unable to say anything on his behalf. His confidence that my uncle and every other black man who heard of the Klan's coming ride would scurry under their houses to hide in chicken droppings was too humiliating to bear (14).

Angelou's autobiographies tend to derive their form through the interaction of characters rather than through a dramatic line of action. The dialogues in this novel gives a realistic approach that help to connect to the events and characters. Throughout the novel one can see the dialogues such as the interviewing scene of the Stamps people to Bailey about the life of the people in North after the stay of Bailey and Maya in St.Louis,

“Well, how is it up North?”

“See any of them big buildings?”

“Ever ride in one of them elevators?”

“Was you scared?”

“Whitefolks any different, like they say” (90)

Another dialogue that highlights the conversation between Momma and Bailey is the encounter of Bailey after a great fear of missing where Momma asks Bailey,

“You know it's night and you just now getting home?”

“Yes, ma'am.” He was empty. Where was his alibi?

“What you been doing?”

“Nothing.”

“That's all you got to say?”

“Yes, ma'am.”

“All right, young man. We'll see when you get home.”(116)

Angelou makes use of tools of characterization to present oppression felt by the protagonist Maya and the sense of power that she felt by the whites to exaggerate the conflict between the two communities. The novel consists of four major characters such as the protagonist Maya, Maya's brother Bailey, grandmother Momma Henderson, Uncle Willie and twenty-two minors characters and the minor characters supports to enrich the novel.

Angelou's narratives in autobiography have conformed to the standard stylistic features of autobiography which makes the novel noteworthy. These features which include the use of the first person narrative point of view, employment of imagery and other stylistic techniques used in prose, have been used effectively in sending down her message to her readers. However, it is clear that she has added a different twist, the standard form by blending dialogue with the first person point of view. Her success in doing this, is noticeable in the way she enables her readers to get a real feel and experience of the activity that unfolds during the occurrence of the various incidents, especially by way of using dialogue.

The aspects of literary style that have been carefully explored in this chapter have opened up the Pandora box to enable readers and critics alike to continue the debate on the concept of autobiography as being real or fictitious. It is, in fact, that expert use of literary style that enable her successfully develop the dominant subjects of motherhood, marriage and search for identity. The literary techniques that Angelou employs, help her readers to appreciate her point of view and relieve her experiences as if they were going through the same situations. The fact that Angelou was able to tell her true-life story with a blend of fact and art makes her a successful storyteller. Therefore, Maya Angelou's choice of literary technique in her autobiographical novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was spot-on and appropriate in developing her themes.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings is Maya Angelou's first and the most significant novel of six autobiographical novel series. It deals with Angelou's coming up of age from three to sixteen. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is an important and honest look at racial prejudice in the United States during the 1930s and 1940s, but it is also as compelling and lyrical as a great novel. Young Maya and the other characters are richly realized and complex. The author tells a far-reaching story, emotionally and historically. This book is an essential document for young people who want to understand the plight of African Americans and the ways prejudice affects individuals. The novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was nominated for National Book Award.

Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* plays a significant role in African American literature. The novel begins in the segregated American Jim Crow South of the early twentieth century and ends in San Francisco, shortly after the end of World War II. This turbulent period in American history is insightfully catalogued and examined by Angelou and recounts the events of her own life. Angelou investigates the efforts of systemic segregation and racism on the minds, bodies and identities of black individuals. In many ways, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* provides readers with a crucial account of the first half of the twentieth century from the perspective of a Black southerner.

Angelou worked closely with author and civil rights activist James Baldwin in writing this memoir *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. The book is interesting in the importance it places on literature and language itself, and therefore examines various kinds of writing and poetry from Shakespeare to Dickens to Langston Hughes. The book is also an innovation of a typical autobiography, for it uses techniques and styles common

in fiction while remaining true to Angelou's life story. Angelou's autobiography not only changes the thought and thinking process but also make the strong characters like Maya. Readers like the novel because of strongest argumentative and subversive resistance against racism and injustice. Throughout the journey, Maya has transformed from fear to own identity. It was not only for the self-proclaimed but also for her community. Angelou states that,

Difficulty in writing autobiography as literature is that you have to keep a distance and not imply that the person knew what she was doing from the vantage point of 1987. . . That difficulty is probably the horn, the unicorny horn of the dilemma from which I spin, to try to keep that distance. (Elliot1989; 195).

Angelou focuses on her childhood and early adult experiences in this novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. The writings of Angelou reflect the struggle of racial discrimination, gender inequality, and search for identity in the contemporary society. Maya witnesses the struggled life of the coloured people right from the age of three when she and her brother sent to their grandmother's house in Stamps from California. They were sent through train tagged with their name and like luggage. The quest of her self-identity starts right from the age of three. She encountered the struggles undergone by the cotton pickers in the white's field where they were paid menial for their hard work. Throughout the novel Maya has come across several resistances. Maya felt irritated by the dominating attitude of the dominating community that can be seen in the encounter of powhitetrash girl in Momma's store. Throughout the novel Maya has travelled from one place to another to find her identity and belonging.

Maya became the victim of racial discrimination and rape even in the age of eight. When Maya and Bailey moved to St. Louis Maya's mother's boyfriend Mr. Freeman sexually molested her. Maya's uncles murdered Mr. Freeman. Maya felt guilty about the death of Mr. Freeman and thinks that her words would kill people. There she understands the power of word, her life became mute, and she never talks with people except Bailey.

Maya and Bailey were sent to Arkansas again to live with their Momma. At the time of her self-resistance, Momma introduced Mrs. Bertha Flower to Maya. Mrs. Flower enters Maya life as a god sent angel. Without Mrs. Flower Maya would not become a well-known writer in literature. She is the one who helps Maya to find beauty in her black nature. Mrs. Flower suggests Maya to read literature aloud by offering her some books. Through her time of muteness, Maya finds refuge in books. Literature helps Maya to connect herself therefore books became Maya's companion during the time of hardships.

Maya educates herself through the bitter experiences she faced all through her life and thereby she liberates herself from the society which suppressed her. After several insults and struggles underwent in the White society, Maya at the age of sixteen became a Streetcar conductor. She loves the job because no coloured people were allowed for the job. Then she questions herself whether she is a lesbian because of underdeveloped body. There she educates herself with various books about the lesbian culture. She voluntarily had sex with her neighbour and became pregnant. She delivered a baby boy.

The novel, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, ends with the fragment of self of the young girl who has begun to be reconciled. The selves are aligned together by power, wisdom, religion, the lessons in living that Maya learns along the way. She is also reborn

fully to life and accepts the struggles and challenges not as obstacles but as possibilities of growth. The growth leads her to understand why the caged birds sing. The caged bird sings not because they are trapped but because they know that deep inside, no one can stand against their will to be heard, and when they sing their voices are strong enough to surpass the bars of the cage. The sounds that come from the cage are the sorrow of a wounded bird that elevates the voice in a prayer for freedom. Maya sings her history with many voices, the voices of all her ancestors. Especially the voices of the black women who helped her find own voice so that she could leave the cage and look back to it knowing why the caged birds sings. The birds sing because they know and hope that one day they will be truly free. Such a novel speaks powerfully to African descended peoples throughout the America.

The novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* portrays the different incidents in Maya's life that affected her and helped her to understand and liberates her from the shackles of the society. Maya's rape, subsequent muteness, her interaction with Mrs. Bertha Flowers, mocking powhitetrash girls, her visit to the dentist, Maya's month living in a Junkyard, her struggle to become a San Francisco street car conductor, doubt about her sex, her graduation and accepting motherhood were the incidents that educated her personality and paved the path to understand life in a better perspective.

Throughout the novel, one can see Maya undergoing lot of sufferings in the White dominating society. When people were restricted to show off their opinions and emotions, Angelou highlights her life to the society. This educates the people who were chained in the name of suppression. Even though Maya undergoes a chained situation in her life, she never remains just accepting the fact. Instead, she fights for her identity. She moves from North to Stamps then South to north of United States, lives along with her

mother, her father and her Momma but she did not find her identity. She has undergone several name changes in the novel that loses her identity. Maya tries her hands in different venture like Streetcar conductor, a mother, a child, club dancer, prostitute but she eventually fails. However, Mr. Flower paved a right way for Maya. She channeled Maya to focus on literature. The education she got by the way she travelled in her life and the education from literature helps Maya to liberate herself and find her identity as a writer.

Angelou through the character of Maya educates people that through one may face several destructions in life they should not remain silent. Instead, they should voice out their feelings and emotions. In every incident, one should educate oneself. The American Vice President Kamala Harris says that, “There will be a resistance to your ambition, there will be people who say to you, ‘You are out of your lane.’ They are burdened by only having the capacity to see what has always been instead of what can be.” (2021). Instead of blaming others Maya tries to liberate the society by expressing life in the form of autobiography with the power of education and literature. Angelou as a Phoenix burnt by the discrimination, ignorance, insults and rape in the society but she rises out from her ashes with a great strength of choosing her identity as a writer.

Angelou with her untiring effort has gained wider respectability and greater reception as an African American woman. She has richly recorded the African American feminine experience right from the early days of the Civil Rights Movement to the present day through her character named Maya. Francoise Lionnet states, “She creates an allegory of the feminine condition which cuts across historical, social and racial lines” (Manora, 363). With the liberation, Maya gets through education, Angelou, gets a chance to recite a poem on the inaugural ceremony of President Bill Clinton in January 1993. *On*

the Pulse of Morning was the title of the poem. Therefore Angelou excelled in the field of literature by her inspiring poems and autobiographical novels.

The novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* highlights Angelou as a Phoenix who has burnt herself in the suffering and racial discrimination that she has undergone in the White dominating society. Even though she became ash as a victim of discrimination, ignorance, rape and muteness, she gets her new birth from the same ashes as a writer. Liberation through education helps Angelou to get her identity as an African American Writer after several struggles.

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Shadows of Biafra in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

A project submitted to

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Conflict of Biafran War	16
Three	Strings of Suffering	27
Four	Repercussions of War	39
Five	Summation	53
	Works Cited	59

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled Shadows of Biafra in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Ashwini Machado. A the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Ms. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Ms. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Guide

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled *Shadows of Biafra in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun* submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmanian Sundaranar University for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature, is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

Ashwini Machado.A

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PREFACE

This project entitled *Shadows of Biafra in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun* highlights the sufferings and conflicts faced by the African women and children at large. The story is said to be a success because the reader is able to travel four decades ago and feel and see what the people have gone through.

The first chapter Introduction deals with the literary fame of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, her life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of her work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter Conflicts of Biafran War delineates with the conflicts faced by the Igbo people of Nigeria, which shows the inhumanity of the Hausa.

The third chapter Strings of Suffering focuses on the ultimate suffering of the common people of Nigeria.

The fourth chapter Repercussions of War describes the impact of Biafran war upon the Igbo people.

The fifth chapter Summation sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It also presents the narrative technique employed by the writer and validates the study.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

INTRODUCTION

Literature has supreme value and it plays a major role which leads to the further intellectual development of the world. Literature is a product of imagination, originality, thought, feeling, emotions and ideas. It makes the readers, wiser and better citizens. Literature is seen as language tool for the purpose of exploring human experiences in diverse situations. It has become a true element for cultural globalization, especially for Africa whose literature has been worthless and denied by Western critics. African literature usually refers to a comprehensive, complex and creative literature of and from Africa.

African literature is mainly classified into three distinctly and widely accepted categories-traditional oral literature of Africa, literature written in indigenous African languages and literature written in European languages. Traditional oral literature of Africa may be in the form of prose, verse or proverb. It is generally described as orature. Orature flourished in Africa primarily in absence of widespread literacy and was handed down the generations through memorization and recitation. The contents may differ in length ranging from single sentence formulation such as proverb to epics which has to be performed over a period of time. This verbal art had a utilitarian purpose of providing entertainment as well as instruction. They served as the medium to explain the creation of universe, the essence of the activities of God and creatures and their intra and inter relationships. Oral folklore was employed to restore faith in group values and discourage anti-social tendencies.

With one or two exceptions most of African written literature is in European languages especially English, French and Portuguese. Francophone African literature

are nevertheless not extensive as Anglophonic African literature. This can be ascribed to the fact that though Africa was colonized by several European imperial powers, British annexed various parts across the length and breadth of Africa beginning from Egypt, Uganda and Kenya in North Africa, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nigeria in West Africa; Zambia, Botswana and South Africa in the southern part of Africa. It is usually referred as modern African literature i.e. dominant African literature. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986) chooses to describe them 'Afro European Literatures'.

Modern African writing arose out of association between West and Africa, a contact which was both historical and experimental dimensions. One of the striking features of African novels is that, it is a genre developed as a particular body of imaginative discourse occupied with the modes of resisting the role of western cultural hegemony in determining African states of consciousness. This strain of protest can be witnessed in the writings of almost all African authors especially of the post-colonial period. The writing during the post-colonial era (between 1960 and 1970) is usually referred as post-colonial literature.

Many African nations gained political independence from their colonial rulers and a considerable volume of African written literature in English was authored during these post-colonial times. Thus, post-colonial African literature is a mode to comprehend the African psyche, the physical and other parameters of African life. It symbolizes the African intellectual response to their experiences of colonialism and neo colonialism. The rich traditions of African continent, the trials and tribulations of contemporary African life induced by socio-politico-economic experience of colonialism and its agonizing neo colonial aftermath permeates in African literary texts.

African literary giants like Wole Soyinka, Esika Mapahele, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o made colossal contribution to African literature. The writings of these writers helped in familiarizing the 'African Consciousness' in Europe and America. Writers of this era were artists cum political activists. These works reflect the sense of euphoria at the birth of independent nations. These writers of African ancestry were committed to restore faith of people in themselves and society-that is 'decolonizing the mind'. An important touchstone in post-colonial African literature was achieved when Wole Soyinka received Nobel Prize in literature from Africa. It represented the West's acknowledgement of Nigerian literary extraordinaire. African literature also received momentum when a series on African writers was published by Heinemann Publishers. African English literature is now well-recognized and African works like Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is a classic that is approved in the syllabi of the Universities in the West.

Nigeria offers the greatest literary output, notably Afro centric English languages yet it has so far not been able to attract the attention of Western literary circles. Nigerian English literature has a greater influence nationally and internationally. Anglo-phone Nigerian English literature has affiliated itself more convincingly with better artistic capitulation to the western audiences. Nigerian development is well represented and appreciated in other countries.

Nigeria is a home to over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups and over fifty languages. However, the three most dominant tribes in the country are Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. The Hausa dominate the northern region of Nigeria, the Yoruba dominate the South Western region and the Igbo dominate the South Eastern region. Religious differences also endorse the strong divide between different regions of Nigeria. The Hausa are predominantly Muslim. The Igbo are mostly Catholic Christians and Yorubas

are split between Christians of various denominations and Muslims. The different tribes of Nigeria operated as separate states with little interactions with each other until its unification and colonization by Great Britain in 1914. During the colonization of Nigeria by Great Britain, local tribes were used to govern their regions and the British government served as the central power. The Hausa excelled in the military field and made up most of the colony's military forces. Since the trade capitals and oil reserves of Nigeria are located in the South, the Yoruba and the Igbo naturally excelled in education and trades. The balance of power was well-regulated by the British so there were little ethnic conflicts.

After Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the balance of power was maintained through elections and a democratic approach was given to all national issues. However, the situation became volatile with back-to-back military coups that were led mostly by corrupt Hausa military officers. The coups also generated ethnic violence between the different groups and tension was high. In an attempt to rule its own region, the Igbo declared themselves independent from Nigeria and named the south eastern region of the nation Biafra. But since most of Nigeria's valuable natural resources lay in the new "Biafra", Nigeria refused to recognize the newly formed country, which led to war between Nigeria and Biafra. The war lasted from 1967 to 1970, claiming about three million civilian and military casualties. At the end, the Biafran state was eradicated and discontinued. This is why "Biafra" carries a negative connotation in the books.

Currently, all tribes of Nigeria are functioning in a cooperative manner though underlying tension still strains the relationship. Although members of the different tribes interact freely all over the nation and equally share political powers, the clear division among the tribes led to civil unrest and rebellion.

The compositions of Nigerian writers like Chinua Achebe, Ben Okri and Wole Soyinka are often pervaded with a sense of dismay and pain at the state of Nigeria during the colonial and post-colonial era. The writings provide anthropological information about Nigerian life serve as windows into their cultures. Nigerian literary works act as a medium to reflect the thoughts of the nation and tend to rekindle long submissive often humiliated culture and society. Initial post-colonial Nigerian literature celebrated Nigeria's much awaited independence from the political domination and cultural servility rendered to the country by its colonial masters, the British. But this 'tryst with destiny' was short lived as Nigeria was engulfed in inter-regional and inter-ethnic violence and corruptions of a neo-imperialist nation state. This transformation from pre-independence hope and faith to post-independence pain and disillusionment is painted vividly in various Nigerian/African literary outputs.

The torch of Nigerian literature was then reassigned to the hands of second generation poets like Odia Ofeimuna and Nigi Osundure and authors of the level of excellence in skills such as Biyi-Bandele Thomas and Ben Okri. Ben Okri received the Bookers prize, in 1991 for his novel. *The Famished Road* as, "It was a beautifully written and moving novel which conveyed Nigerian peasant life in a changing world" (59). Themes like corruption, military excuses, nationalism often feature in his novels. However 'the tradition of protest' through literature is slightly subdued in his works. This is more explicitly registered in the texts of Achebe and Soyinka. Nonetheless, his essay "The catastrophe now facing Nigeria" is an attempt on Nigerian politics. It was a reaction to Nigerian political crisis that emerged after 1993 election results. He restrains from portraying and 'overt' preference or prejudice regarding any tribal community, party or geo-political area of Nigeria. Thus, almost all the Nigerian literary artist question and challenge the 'too-modest' representation of Africa as cultic and

mystifying land; a dark continent; a formless area of life devoid of human significance. Instead their works highlight the trepidation of new born nation that is undergoing a painful process of conversation from a colonial to neo-classical to wholly self-determining nation.

In this slowly renovating Nigeria, people are facing various challenges in their day to day life. Life is a bundle of challenges for all people all over the world and Nigerian women has to face a multitude of problems like poverty, world and Nigerian women has to face a multitude of problems like poverty, sexism, racism, gender inequality, polygamy, infringement of reproductive rights, domestic violence and intimidation by patriarchal practices. Since time immemorial womenfolk have been forced to confront challenges and accept impositions thrust upon them by society, customs and traditions and men.

All over the world in every social setup, women have been assigned lower and subordinated position compared to men over the years and they had been groomed to accept this relegated position. This degenerated status is so deeply etched in a woman's psyche that she performs her duties, functions and obligations without demanding any recognition and rarely shows a spirit of rebellion. She chooses to be an embodiment of love, patience and sacrifice. Female subordination has been the set feature of Nigerian society. On one hand she is expected tom participate in the civilization of land, preparation of food, home education of children and other matrimonial matters. But on the other hand, she is coerced to accept ignominious position both at home and society where all the important socio-economic and political decisions are taken by male elders of the community.

The status of women in African countries has been undergoing a rapid change. Access to western education; exposure to western culture; awareness about the benefits

of education; urbanization and active participation in various sectors of employment resulted in financial independence and ushered emotional-mental well-being. It also helped her to gain identity of her own and realize herself as a human being capable of learning and earning.

Nigerian women face the constraints of both time and space, neither do they have the luxury of having a room for themselves where they can write in solitude and privacy nor the time needed to indulge in reflective and introspective thinking. The obstacles of African women are further accentuated by the indifferent attitude of the government.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi (1977-), Nigerian creative writer and essayist, was born on 15 September 1977 in Enugu, Nigeria, the fifth of six children, to James Nwoye and Grace Ifeoma Adichie. The Igbo family's ancestral hometown was Abba in Anambra State, but Adichie grew up in Nsukka, where her parents worked. Her father was professor of statistics at the University of Nigeria and later became the institution's deputy vice-chancellor, while her mother, a graduate in sociology, was its first female registrar.

Adichie began writing stories as a child. Her first pieces were heavily influenced by the British children's literature of which she was an avid reader; her early prose was, more specifically, modeled on the books of English author Enid Blyton. When Adichie was about ten years old, she discovered African novels such as *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Nigerian Chinua Achebe and *The African Child* was (originally published in French as *L' enfant nair* in 1953) by Guinean Camara Laya. In later essays and interviews, she described the reading of these books as a turning point in her development as a writer, for they led her to understand that her own literary creations need not be cast in European molds but could mirror her own African experiences.

Adichie completed her primary and secondary education at the University of Nigeria School, winning several awards for her academic excellence. She then studied pharmacy and medicine at the University for a Year and a half but rapidly realized that she did not want to enter the medical profession. Of her beginnings as a writer, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie says: I didn't ever consciously decide to pursue writing. I've been writing since I was old enough to spell, and just sitting down and writing made me feel incredibly fulfilled (Anyia 2003). In 1997 she published a collection of poems entitled *Decisions* and left Nigeria for the United States to study communication at Drexel University in Philadelphia on a scholarship. *Decisions*, Adichie's first book-length published work, tackles themes such as politics, religion, and love- subject matters also at the heart of her later writing. In this collection, the young author occasionally voices hope for her country's future, but in many of the political pieces she expresses her frustration at Nigeria's struggles. The following year she published a play, *For Love of Biafra*, which deals with the Nigerian civil war.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie recounts the painful experiences of a young Igbo woman, Adaobi, and her family, at the time of the Nigerian civil war of the late 1960s. The family's initial optimism about the creation of an independent and peaceful Biafran nation in Eastern Nigeria, after the region's secession from the rest of the country, ends in disillusionment. Daily massacres, hunger and disease claim several members of Adaobi's family and shatter the Biafran hopes. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is marked as the author's first imaginative exploration of the Biafran conflict, which had divided the country between 1967 and 1970 and had claimed both her grandfathers.

Shortly before the publication of her debut novel, Adichie began to gain recognition on the international literary scene as several of her short stories won, or were nominated for, prestigious awards. In 2002, she was declared joint winner of BBC

Short Story Competition for “That Harmattan Morning” and made the short list Caine Prize for African Writing with her piece You in America. She further won the 2002-2003 David T. Wong International Short Story Prize for Half of a Yellow Sun and the 2003 O.Henry Prize for The American Embassy.

Adichie’s first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, was published to critical acclaim in 2003. Set in Nigeria against the background of the political turmoil of the late 1990s, the story centres on Kambili Achike, a fifteen-year-old schoolgirl, and her family. Kambili’s father, Eugene, is an ambiguous man: a devout Catholic and a political rights activist, he also rules his household with a heavy hand. The narrative, told from the perspective of young Kambili, explores the teenager’s and her brother Jaja’s responses to their father’s authoritarian attitude, as alternative models are provided by their more liberal aunt Ifeoma and their Igbo traditionalist grandfather, whom Eugene dismisses as a “heathen”. Family, religion, politics and tolerance thus emerge as central themes in Adichie’s outstanding debut novel.

Adichie’s reputation was further enhanced by the critical success of *Purple hibiscus*. Among other distinctions, the novel won the 2004 Hurston/Wright Legacy Award for Best Debut Fiction and the 2005 Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for Best First Book; in 2004 it was shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction and long-listed for the Booker Prize.

Meanwhile, Adichie continued to combine her literacy and academic work. In 2004 she obtained a master’s degree in creative writing from Johns Hopkins University; in 2005-2006 she was granted a Hodder Fellowship from the University of Princeton, where she taught a class in introductory fiction. In the fall of 2006 she enrolled in master’s program in African history at Yale University. At the same time, she pursued her writing career, publishing numerous stories in international journal such as *Granta*

and the New Yorker and several essays in prestigious newspaper, including the Guardian and the Washington Post. Although her short fiction has dealt with themes ranging from the Biafran war to contemporary Nigeria Igbo immigrants in the United States, her essays often express her complicated attachment to her country of origin, fiercely denouncing its corrupt political system and the hypocrisy of its religious leaders

The publication of Adichie's second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, which once again testified to the author's concern with the complexities of the Biafran war. Indeed, the book centers on several Nigerian protagonists and an English character before and during the conflict and masterfully associates a vigorous condemnation of the brutalities of war with a sensitive portrayal of individual destinies. The novel, blurbed by Achebe, gained instant critical praise received major accolades. Most notably, it won the Orange Broadband Prize for fiction in 2007 and was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book in Africa region the same year. *Half of a yellow sun* was also a commercial success, especially in the United Kingdom, and sealed the writer's status as one of the leading figures of early twenty-first-century African literature.

Adichie has celebrated Nigeria's intellectual vigour and cultural wealth, while also displaying a keen awareness of the problems that have plagued her country over the decades. She has also often explored the challenges faced by her compatriots outside Nigeria, as another major theme running through her work has been Nigerian immigration to the United States, which she has often tackled from the perspective of female protagonists. In her short fiction, Adichie frequently featured young women who wish to seek happiness in America, but who must face the harsh realities of Nigerian or immigrant life instead. In the stories collected in *The Thing around Your Neck* (2009), Adichie's female characters go through humiliating visa procedures ("The American

Embassy”); they have to negotiate marriages to obnoxious husbands (“The Arrangers of Marriage”) or deal with unfaithful ones (“Imitation”); and they are the victims of sexual abuse, encounter racism, and experience of financial difficulties (“The Thing around Your Neck”). In this collection, gender is also explored through a range of other lenses, including same-sex attraction and homosexuality (“On Monday of Last Week”, “The Shivering”), violence and masculinity (“Cell One”), and sibling relationships (“Tomorrow is Too Far”).

Most of the stories in *The Thing around Your Neck* are set either in Nigeria or the United States, two locations that also play a key role in Adichie’s novel *Americanah* (2013). The narrative opens as its heroine, Ifemelu, is about to return to Nigeria after spending thirteen years living in the United States. Ifemelu is the author of a successful lifestyle blog domain dealing with issues of race and culture, but she decides to close her site to go back to the country where she feels she truly belongs- a return that may also offer the possibility of reconnecting with her first love, Obinze, now a husband and father.

Americanah might be regarded as generic hybrid, somewhere between the love story and the socio-political novel. It subtly explores the emotional consequences of geographical separation, and it offers a deft and humorous portrayal of two countries, the United States and the Nigeria, which must each negotiate the social and cultural demons that they have inherited from their vastly different histories.

Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* was published in 2006. Anticipated by both critics and avid readers of African literature at the time of its release, the book rapidly became one of the UK’s best-selling works of fiction when it was featured on Richard and Judy’s Book club on Channel 4. It subsequently earned several prestigious literary awards, among the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction (2007).

Epic, ambitious, and triumphantly realized, *Half a Yellow Sun* is a remarkable novel about moral responsibility, about the end of colonialism, about ethnic allegiances, about class and race- and about the ways in which love can complicate them all. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is licensed for publication in 37 languages.

Adichie unravels the realities of war beginning with the physical and literal before going into the psychological and the emotional facets. She frames the explosion of the North-South conflict as a pivotal moment that does not just offer historical context but functions as a stepping stone into the psychological and emotional effects of war on individuals, relationship, ethnic groups and the nation as a whole.

Half of a Yellow Sun is an expression of polyphony on the Nigerian Civil War. Adichie goes beyond historical research and travels deep into Nigeria's memory, going into the roots of the conflict, into the injustice, violence and pain of war; the irrelevance of humanity amidst these conditions.

Adichie trespasses the boundary of the historical recount of events by interweaving human aspects, turning on multiple microphones for each of these voices to be heard. The thematic of war opens up into the bigger theme of humanity where we see characters struggling with love issues of love, class, race, profession and family, among others. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is an example of one of the many forms where fiction can coexist with history as narrative. One could argue that it is a literary approach to Hayden White's concept of history as narrative. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, unrestrained by the margins of truth and untruth which historians are bound to, produces a sincere version of Nigerian Civil War which is not just a fascinating read but an expression of knowledge about human kind.

Half of a Yellow Sun takes place in Nigeria prior to and during the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970). The effect of the war is shown through the relationships of five

people's lives including the twin daughters of an influential businessman, a professor, a British citizen, and a Nigerian houseboy. After Biafra's declaration of secession, the lives of the main characters drastically change and are torn apart by the brutality of the civil war and decisions in their personal lives.

The book jumps between events that took place during the early and late 1960s, when the war took place, and extends until the end of the war. In the early 1960s, the main characters are introduced: Ugwu, a 13-year old village boy who moves in with Odenigbo, to work as his houseboy. Odenigbo frequently entertains intellectuals to discuss the political turmoil in Nigeria. Life changes for Ugwu when Odenigbo's girlfriend, Olanna, moves in with them. Ugwu forms a strong bond with both of them, and is a very loyal houseboy. Olanna has a twin sister, Kainene, a woman with dry sense of humor, tired by the pompous company she runs for her father. Her lover Richard is an English writer who goes to Nigeria to explore Igbo-Ukwu art.

Jumping four years ahead, trouble is brewing between the Hausa and the Igbo people and hundreds of people die in massacres, including Olanna's beloved auntie and uncle. A new republic, called Biafra, is created by the Igbo. As a result of the conflict, Olanna, Odenigbo, their infant daughter, whom they refer to only as "Baby", and Ugwu are forced to flee Nsukka, which is the university town and the major intellectual hub of the new nation. They finally end up in the refugee town of Umuahia, where they suffer and struggle due to food shortages, the constant air raids and the environment of paranoia. There are also allusions to a conflict between Olanna and Odenigbo.

When the novel jumps back to the early 1960s, we learn that Odenigbo has slept with a village girl, Amala, who then has his baby. Olanna is furious at his betrayal, and sleeps with Richard in a moment of liberation. She goes back to Odenigbo and when

they later learn that Amala refused to keep her newborn daughter, Olanna decides that they would keep her.

During the war, Olanna, Odenigbo, Baby, and Ugwu live with Kainene and Richard, where Kainene was running a refugee camp. Their situation is hopeless, as they have no food nor medicine. Kainene decides to trade across enemy lines, but does not return, even after the end of the war a few weeks later. The book ends ambiguously, with the reader not knowing if Kainene lives.

Adichie's novels reveal her desire to combat the single story of Nigeria's history while illustrating the strength of middleclass Igbo woman to gain agency within both the domestic and the national communities. *Half of a Yellow Sun* gives voices to the historically voiceless and help Nigeria to heal from its past that includes colonialism, war, and governmental instability. Therefore, *Half of a Yellow Sun* is Adichie's attempt to repossess Nigerian dignity.

The historical aspect of the causes of the war and the political leaders involved is to understand and relate with the context of the novel is dealt in the forth coming chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

CONFLICTS OF BIAFRAN WAR

Half of a Yellow Sun is a story based on the Biafran War that took place between 1967 and 1979 in Nigeria. The religious conflict that led to Biafra civil war, in which thousands of people including women and children were killed. The civil war was not a direct result of the religious conflict. However, the political conflict and the ethnic conflict were aggravated with the religious divide existing in the country. The religious divide was so strong that during the three years of civil war, many innocent people were killed since they belonged to a particular region. Many women disappeared and nobody could trace them, also relationships were broken due to the religious difference. Though the conflict started because of political ambition, religious favoritism was at the backdrop of the historical conflict.

The Igbo ethnic people were mostly Catholic Christians who were influenced by the evangelical missionaries from Europe. They had disgust with the Hausa ethnic people as they were mostly Muslims. The impacts of Biafra civil war on the domestic and public life of the weaker section. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Chimamanda Adichie, has portrayed the humiliating experience of the Igbo Christians in Nigeria that left its scars for generations to come. The cruelest method of violence adopted then was starvation. Adichie does not support any religious group. It is nevertheless concerned about the impact of violence on women, children and the minority community during the civil war. Though the novelist Adichie did not witness the religious conflict during Biafra civil war, her grandparents were directly affected by the war.

Half of a Yellow Sun mainly reminds the world about starvation, the anguish, the massacres, and the mass killings that took place during the Biafra civil war that was fought between the Muslim dominated Northern Nigeria and the minority Christian belt in the southeast region, a self-proclaimed nation known as Biafra. As the Nigerian troops advance, the characters run for their survival and their loyalty is tested.

Half of a Yellow Sun revolves around moral responsibility and particularly ethno-religious allegiance. Adichie indicts the outside world for its unconcern, arrogance and ignorance that perpetuated the conflict. Ugwu, the houseboy in Odenigbo's house, becomes the most important character towards the end of the novel. His transformation from a naive houseboy to a writer is the direct influence of the war on him. He chronicles his experience during the war. Chimamanda Adichie wants to remind people about the dark the patch in Nigeria's history and ensure that people do not forget. Chimamanda Adichie said on the occasion of *Half of a Yellow Sun* winning the Orange Broadband Prize for the fiction that the book was her refusal to forget.

Adichie's refusal to forget accentuates one of the essential function of the story teller in traditional African society.

Half of a Yellow Sun, the Nigerian army, after facing stiff resistance from the Biafra forces, the economic blocks and starvation is used as the final step to subdue Biafra forces. The parallel presentation of the historical events leading to the civil war and its impact on the soldiers and the common people and the fictional story involving the different characters and their adventures during and after the civil war are well balanced. It is therefore essential to know the historical background leading to the civil war to the foreground how geopolitical issues have influenced the course of the war and its aftermath. The various methods of the violence used against the minorities during the civil war in order for the majority to win the war is focused. It also brings to notice other themes like relationship and religious divide and the manner in which they have been affected by the civil war.

Nigerian-Biafra civil war began on July 6, 1967 and lasted till January 15, 1970. Religious differences endorse the strong divide between different regions and the ethnicity of Nigeria. The Northern region was dominated by the Hausa-Fulani tribes who were mostly Muslims. The South-western region was dominated by the Yoruba tribe who were of different religious communities. The South-eastern region was dominated by the Igbo-Christians. They lived in mostly self-ruling and democratically organized communities. The Igbo were said to have been a republic tribe for thousands of years. The tradition derived differences were perpetuated and enhanced by the British system of colonial rule in Nigeria.

During 1940s and 1950s, the Igbo, the Yoruba and the Hausa communities united and fought together for the independence of Nigeria. But in the year 1966, the military governor of the Igbo-dominated Southeast Odumegwu Ojukwu declared

publicly in the southern parliament the retirement of the south eastern region and declared it as the republic of Biafra, an independent nation. The British and the Soviet Union supported the Nigerian government while Canada and France helped the Biafra rulers, as the Nigerian forces faced stiff resistance from the Biafra forces, it began to close the ring around Biafra creating economic blockade and surround Biafra. This led to a humanitarian disaster as there was a widespread hunger and starvation in the besieged Igbo area. It has been recorded that the civilians were starved and slaughtered by the Nigerian military during the war. It has been estimated that more than three million people have been killed due to the conflict mostly of hunger and various diseases due to lack of food supply.

The whole world became a spectator to the starvation, death and other sufferings of the aftermath of the civil war. There had been deterioration in the relationship between the ethnic and the religious group in Nigeria for many centuries and particularly in the mid-seventies and eighties. It has been recorded that the debate on Shariat (Islamic laws) in the Constituent Assembly which gave birth to the second Republic created division within the religious groups of the country in the late seventies. This period witnessed the influence of the Iranian revolution and the growth of Islamic fundamentalism.

The historic background of the civil war clearly highlights the contrasting perspectives of the political arena along with the religious conflicts and how they complemented each other. The Western liberal influence on the elite in the Igbo Christian community isolated them from the relatively less educated but sturdily religious Muslim community. The political rivalry between the Igbo leader Odumegwu Ojukwu and the leader of the Nigerian force Yakubu Gowon was responsible for the

prolonged civil war. Both of them wanted to remain in power and had little concern about the starvation and the death of millions of people during the conflict.

Half of a Yellow Sun portrays the character of the war and the individuals who are faced with destruction of ideals, values, relationships, bonds eventually leading to complete devastation to life and belongings. The first part of the novel is set in Nsukka, focusing on the impending crisis and the civil war yet to begin. Ugwu, a young boy, has moved from rural Nigeria to Nsukka to work with Professor Odenigbo to stay in the University Campus. The educated master as well as his mistress, Olanna, treats him as his family member. Odenigbo is a radical surrounded by a group of activists aimed at fighting for the cause of Biafra. Among his coterie prominent are, Lara Adebayo, Okeoma, Professor Ezeka and Dr. Patel, and two English namely Susan and Richard. They are engaged in grim social and intellectual activities, with spells of alcohol and food. The members are comfortable in the company of each other and indulge in serious intellectuals meetings in Odenigbo's house. The second part of the novel opens with a coup led by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu. Mayhem in Nigeria has participated in form of a coup, though initially it is a welcome move to the Odenigbo band. Yet, the coup d'état fails to solve the problems of the country giving rise to increased anarchy. The Nzeogwu government promotes business man like Chief Ozobia a wheeler dealer who drags the government further into trouble.

Kainene verbalizes, Chief Ozobia, her father: "Daddy hasn't wasted any time ingratiating himself. He ran off until things calmed down, and now he's back to make new friends" (134). A counter coup takes place with the Igbo officers in Nigeria being killed. The northern part of the country chants, "The Igbo must go. The infidels must go. Araba, Araba!" (147). Olanna escapes to Nsukka from Kano narrating the grim story of the killings of the Igbo people and her narrow escape. The episode ushers in a

demand of secession which Odumegwu Ojukwu materializes in Biafra's declaration of independence. Ojukwu addresses his people:

Fellow countrymen and women, you the people of the Eastern Nigeria: conscious of the supreme authority of Almighty God over all mankind; having mandated me to proclaim on your behalf and in your name that Eastern Nigeria be a sovereign independent Republic; now therefore I do hereby solemnly proclaim that the territory and region known as and called Eastern Nigeria, together with her continental shelf and territorial waters, shall henceforth be an independent sovereign of the name and the title of the republic of Biafra. (161-162).

Odenigbo climbs, up to the podium waving his Biafra flag: "swaths of red, black, and green and, at the center a luminous half of a yellow sun" (163). Odenigbo is sent to Umuahia to render his services to the Manpower Directorate of Biafra. Part three of the novel drifts back into past where the war is not the talk of the day in and around 1960s. Odenigbo is living in village with his mother, and his short and his consummative affair with Amala and the subsequent birth of their daughter in the absence of Olanna, who upset by Odenigbo's act herself enter into a seductive affair with Richards.

Part four of the novel resumes the War scenario of late 1960s and its tormenting effects on the citizens of the weak and newly seceded state of Biafra. The defected state is in crisis and in the verge of a breakdown. The hospitals are flooded and there are no medicines; the relief centers are full of people and there is nothing to provide them relief; there is hope for victory and there is no means to win the war. The teachers and the nationalists incite the feelings of nationalism in the people, and provoke them to even lay their lives for the cause of Biafra, despite delinquent act unreasonable enough to contribute to a successful rebellion. Teachers like Olanna teach

the national anthem deepening the nationalist feelings in the people and reminding them that, “Biafra will win the war, God has written it in the sky” (289). Though there is enough reason to believe in the cause of Biafra yet there is no justification for the act that they have ensued. The newly consecrated state has lost faith in its own people and suspects them first out of its own weakness. Kainene and Richard face the agony of soldiers as they are moving from Port-Harcourt and Orlu.

Ojukwu’s leadership is doubted, and he pledges that after gaining independence and as the war is over they will first remove him from office. The revolutionaries soon change to the worst, the soldiers do not pay house rent, force young boys into army and to fight; those who are capable enough, bribe them escaping terrors, young girls are targeted and raped, and the refugee centers swell by day and night. Soon they lose their capital Umuahia, which symbolizes the coming defeat and beginning of the end of Biafra and its secession. The horrors are equally worse on the other side even decent and the honest people have turned corrupt. It is told that Father Marcel has started sleeping with women. Odenigbo and his people are forced to leave Umuahia, from here they escape to Abba before returning to Nsukka. He finds his property destroyed by Nigerian soldiers, Kainene’s property taken over by government she gone missing is declared dead. There are other evil deeds that lead him and Olanna devastated and unable to return to their earlier state of existence.

The war has turned epochal for them, their entire generation, and for the generations to come. Psyche War suffers that beast in man destroying all his dreams and comfort. This act of violence precipitated by whatsoever is self-destructive in nature and causes more harm to self than to anyone else. This thirst for blood is an instinct in human beings that precipitates into war. War turns their behavior abnormal

and turning those alcoholics, rapists, and a series of repugnant impulses. They are thrown astray into a foray for food, shelter, and safety.

Unsupported by any other national emissary Biafra suffers on all sides, the armies are repelled, people die of disease and starvation, crime, exploitation of children and women especially, and above all a thwart to national sentiment that sends flying into quarters unknown and unforeseen. The gang rape to which Ugwu is a party to the belligerent warring parties. The greatest irony lies not in the fact that a mere thirteen year old boy is party to it but the fact that these are carried over by soldiers who are fighting in the pretext of liberating people from their oppressors. This surfaces the animalistic instincts of men in form of proceedings of the war.

Odenigbo and Olanna have taken refuge in Orlu, Ugwu joins them where they contemplate their wrong doings and repent for their crimes. The Biafra affair and dream is all over, Ugwu appears to have renounced war though others do keep the hopes of Biafra alive in their hearts. Ugwu's realization that, "There is no such thing as greatness" (399) about the hardships and abhorrence towards war. The surrender of Biafran forces instigates more misery for those who were supporting the cause of a separatist state. Kainene and many other thousands are missing; these people were just civilians who were fighting for their survival during the war and not supporting any side in wake of victory and have fallen for the cause without leading to anywhere.

The portrayal of the Civil war in Nigeria during the late 1960s in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is an account of history's horrific episode of disaster and suffering of common men for no reason and much more than that it goes unaccounted. The existence of Biafra in Nigeria is still a social reality. Adichie draws her characters to form the social environment that were colored in time of the tumults who lived in and were a party to it. She peeps into the feelings and character of human beings, old and young,

rich and poor, educated and illiterate, of sexes, good and worse, the conqueror and the vanquished. Adichie picks names common in Nsukka region like Ugwu; whereas, Odenigbo, Olanna, and Kainene are common in Anambra belt; contrarily, Richards and Susan are foreigners caught up in the war.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun* Adichie reveals the truest form of war where the soldiers enter into a murdering spree killing civilians, molesting and raping women, and vandalise life and property. The exploitation of women at the hands of rich and powerful is also a form of violence that Adichie presents in the novel. Young women have been shown traded for favours from relief workers and soldiers both fighting for and those fighting against the Biafra cause. Eberechi, young women whom Ugwu had a crush on, is handed over to an army officer by her parents securing a job for her brother in the Army. Thus she becomes a commodity which has been traded for favours by her own family members. This portrayal of women depicts them as weak and powerless in a social setup. Eberechi too is indifferent to being used as a sex-object as she realizes her frailty and has no role, even nominal, in the entire transaction.

The scene manifests both social and moral corruption that has gone down deeper into Nigerian culture. Nigerian society has reached a low state where human beings are traded as commodities, especially women being treated as inferior to men and are exchanged being equated the commercial value they possess. Olanna too has travelled through the same times when her parent wished to use her to get a contract from finance minister. Amala's case is just another example; Odenigbo's mother uses her as a commodity anticipating to separate Odenigbo from Olanna aiming to get a son from her, albeit she gives birth to a girl.

Thus *Half of a Yellow Sun* exposes how women have suffered under the yoke of patriarchy; they have been oppressed both by men as well as by other women.

The sexual violence, one of Olanna's and Odenigbo's friends called Special Julius freely exploits the war situation and takes, "those young-young girls that crawl around looking for sugar daddies... he takes five of them into his bedroom at the same time. (278). Ugwu too has witnessed several incidents where women have been sexually played upon by army men. He finely observed while serving in the army: Sometimes younger women came and went in the commander's quarter and emerged with sheepish smiles. The sentries at the entrance always raised the barriers to let the women in. (360). Her own sister, Anulika, was gang raped by five men during the war. This incidence is of great importance to focus upon the scene from victim's perspective as Ugwu too has been a party to similar incidence. Despite these, the most horrific of the war crimes towards women are the ones committed by Father Marcel in the refugee camp where he molests all the little girls that come his way for relief and support. Adichie finely comments through Kainene the truth of sexism and nationalism of the nationalist leaders, like Ojukwu the Biafran separatist. He too is party to sexual abuse towards women as he has, "imprisoned men whose wives he wanted, Ojukwu is having an affair with the man's wife and has just had the man arrested for nothing." (313).

This is the portrayal of the Biafra army which is fighting the war. On the pretext to safeguard its own people from the attacking forces seemingly loyal to Nigerian government, has itself turned to rape young and innocent women. Poverty and weakness is not a crime, but the crime is to nurture these two ills, and Biafran leaders seem to tread on these path and exploit their own women who are working as a savior supplying them food and other essentials. Chimamanda Adichie in *Half of a Yellow Sun* has portrayed women as progressive as they come out with positive thinking and promote their own society in difficult times of civil war. Women fight for supplies during the difficult times to keep the war going and support their men both physically

and morally. Women are more entrepreneurial as Kainene promotes self-dependence as a key to success in war times. The novel thus foregrounds the role that Biafran played in Nigeria's political structuring and the civil war.

In the war waged by the patriarchal system, women are the victims. They suffer tremendous pain and suffering especially during the war. *Half of a Yellow Sun* follows a feminist narrative that stresses the strength of women.

CHAPTER THREE

STRINGS OF SUFFERING

Adichie is known for her radical approach in dealing with the issues of feminism. Women are the principal characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Women are brave during and after the war. In all the relationships depicted, in personal or public, women are portrayed as the initiator; they are adventurous, courageous and superior to the male characters. In domestic life, the female characters dominate their counterparts. They are the ones who take decisions on the conduct of the ceremony of marriage, on the ritual practices of choosing a residence, and in rejecting their partners too, women, as shown in the novel, have the upper hand. It is the women who refuse to bow even to the political might of their parents. They do not lose heart when the middle class families of theirs lose everything, expect their lives.

Olanna chooses Odenigbo over Mohammed. Sex also greatly influences relationship during the war. Chimamanda Adichie has brought meaning to the meaningless war by narrating the sexual exploits between people of different ethnicities, religious and even races. These are well-crafted into the novel and simplified the complexity of human relationship in a war torn country. Religion is another multifarious identity that everyone is aware of and which everyone consciously or unconsciously adopts during the war. Relations are like mirrors that once broken are impossible to frame again. So many friends and good neighbors become foes and strangers during the civil war. The religious divide aggravates the conflict and it becomes an easy tool to victimize and annihilate the enemy group. Hence, it is the relationship and the impact of war on it.

Globalization and women empowerment also play a major hand in creating a rift in a relationship. Betrayal in friendship and marital life has been very much exposed in the war. During a war, there is no time to make or strengthen friendships. The only instinct is to run away for survival. No time is spared for any kind of entertainment

expect killing and raping. Olanna loves Odenigbo and Mohammed equally and she has to break any one of their hearts in the event of marrying the other. Olanna made a conscious decision to choose the professor and untangle herself from Mohammed. Olanna did not like him boasting of his lineage of holy warriors and his pious masculinity. Mohammed himself is not interested in continuing the relationship further. Olanna wonders how people can switch affection off and on, to tie and untie emotions. Olanna wants to be different and wants to become a kind of person who does not need anyone to rely on.

Olanna adores Odenigbo as she finds him to be an idealist who is a freedom fighter and an intellectual mathematician, who at the same time spends time writing newspaper articles about African socialism. She feels something has been snatched away from her after the visit by her mother-in-law. Odenigbo and Olanna do not want to beget and raise a baby in an unjust world. Hence they postpone their plans for a child. However, her mother-in-law takes this as an advantage and brings a village girl Amala to replace Olanna. A child is born and she is named 'Baby'. Her mother abandons her and it is Olanna who takes of her. Olanna avenges Odenigbo by sleeping with Richard and then redeems herself through her acceptance of the child.

Olanna thereafter cares for everyone, Ugwu, Baby and of course of her husband. The relationship between Richard and Kainene does not begin smoothly. Richard, a married man finds Kainene more attractive and beautiful than his wife Susan. The irresistible love and passion for Kainene makes him abandon his wife and court Kainene. Kainene herself is hoping for better companion like Richard who is very gentle and who is also concerned about Biafra's freedom. Sex plays an important role in the doing and undoing of any relationship. However sexual urge is not the only cause of infidelity. Richard never feels happy or satisfied in the relationship with his wife. He

likes Kainene for her genuine love and concern rather than the show of false sympathy when one shares one's worries of life.

The relationship between different characters portrayed is not smooth even before civil war. The twin sisters Olanna and Kainene introduced in the novel enjoy all the pleasures of life as they were born to an Igbo minister in the Nigerian Federation. They both lived independently. The elder sister Olanna has a 'live in' relationship with professor Odenigbo. The 'live in' relationship and extramarital relationship portrayed in the novel indicate the celebration of life in the middle of the devastating war. Sexual exploits become the assertion of life symbolizing the balance of physically and violence in the war.

Olanna also has developed a strange relationship with Mohammed of Hausa the Nigerian. However, during the rift between Biafra and the Nigerian forces, the relationship between Olanna and Mohammed gets tainted. Olanna and Mohammed mistrust each other. Olanna always reminds him about her ethnicity and religious identity whenever she gets a chance. Mohammed is helpless at the measure at the massacre of her relatives that include her aunty Arize. Though he helps her to escape from the violent mob, she does not trust him as he belongs to another religion. The junk of relationships and complexities depicted signify that during war people live and powerfully love each other with the same intensity with which they hate and kill each other.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie once admitted that this novel is about relationship and the grittiness of being human. Adichie confess in her essay, "African 'Authenticity' and the Biafran Experiences", that was determined to make Half of a Yellow Sun as the grittiness of being human. It portrays relationship about people who have sex and eat food and laugh, about people, who are fierce consumers of life. The

conflict arises when Odenigbo sleeps with a village girl Amala. Olanna complicates the relationship more by sleeping with Richard, her sister's husband. Sex is the ingredient for the theme of love and betrayal. Sex is also used to denote the typical African man-woman relationship in which the woman takes the lead. However, men have a control over the emotions and passions of women. Olanna needs Odenigbo more than he needs her. In the same way, Kainene loves Richard more than anything.

The graphical description of sexual encounters is a deliberate attempt to emphasise the humanity of the characters. Sex is also used as a substitute for violence in the warfare. People distract themselves by engaging sex instead of facing guns in the battle. When everything in relationship falls apart during war, they hold on to the common and inexpensive activity of sex in all manners. One can also identify the feminist tone in the description of sexual relationship. Both the leading lady characters Olanna and her twin sister Kainene are shown initiating the sexual act, and the men Odenigbo and Richard are portrayed as weak, always at the mercy of their lovers. Sex is again used as a metaphor for the oppression and the exploitation in the African society. The colonel is offered Eberechi as a gift to change her brother's posting. Ugwu and his fellow soldiers rape a bar girl. They have transformed from freedom fighters to target destroyer. Father Marcel uses his power to make young girls his sex slaves. The people who are expected to uphold moral values perpetuate exploitation of their fellow humans.

Sexual acts become a ritual activity during war times. The characters involved in sexual activity are passive. They perform sex acts mechanically without any passion or love as fear of death and apprehensions regarding their survival always lurk behind. It is an irony that even the two popular Abrahamic religions are unable to prevent such abominable sexual exploitation taking place amidst both the warring

groups during the civil war. People use religion for attacking others. They do not follow the tenets of religion when they indulge in violence, rape and other atrocities to destroy the other group. The Christian Igbo people forget Jesus's words 'Love your enemy', and the Hausa Muslims forget Prophet Mohammad's advocacy of 'brotherhood' when they kill their fellow countrymen.

Olanna remembers her meaty relationship with Mohammed in the past before the Biafra war. Olanna used to meet him often in his house and watch him swim and play polo. Olanna spent most of her weekends with him. Mohammed is shown as being close to young girls not only in Nigeria but even in America. Mohammed teases Olanna for loving an intellectual lecturer. Mohammed feels jealous and even thinks of him as the cause of the rift in their relationship. His lineage of holy warriors and pious masculinity has not allowed him to plead with Olanna to break her relation with the lecturer and marry him. Both of their parents were against their love and their desire to marry. They thought the marriage would taint the lineage with infidel blood. Another important Muslim character in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* is Abdulmalik. Whenever Olanna visits her uncle Mbaezi and Aunty Ifeka, she is introduced to Abdulmalik by them. Abdulmalik sells leather slippers close to their stall. Abdulmalik offers Olanna a pair of slippers as a gift. Olanna takes them without any protest. They enjoy Olanna's visit by offering her sugarcane, soup and other village made food items.

The friendship between Abdulmalik, a Hausa, and the Mbaezi family is very thick. All the three have a very good time together. Mbaezi's family is completely annihilated with help of their closest friend and neighbor Abdulmalik. The way they are being massacred is astonishing. The brutality and bestiality displayed by Abdulmalik towards her uncle Mbaezi's family show how the religious difference strips human value and dignity once and forever during a war. Religious identity became very

crucial during the civil war in Nigeria. The war that was waged for the secession had taken a toll on the religious diversity. Most of the Northern Hausa people being Muslims, naturally, showed animosity and hatred towards the Igbo Christians of South-eastern Nigeria.

The Christians living in the Northern region had to pay a heavy price during the conflict. Even their neighbors and well-wishers turned into foes. This situation can be well compared with the enmity between the Muslims and Sikhs in Pari Darvaza of Punjab during the partition. Before the partition they lived as friends and helped each other. But during the partition, the religious difference brought havoc in their lives.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun* the Igbo Christians are slaughtered and left to die in the street to rot. The neighbors become suspicious of each other. Many relationship break due to the religious divide. Olanna loses her relatives just because they belong to Christianity. People are butchered for being born into the minority religion in that region. Good friends become foes and villains as they belong to a particular religion. They feel proud to kill the people of other religion to bring glory to their God. It is ironic that Gods need to survive with the bloodshed of their own creations. Sex and religion make life during the war very complex. Religion is not portrayed positively as it failed to avoid bloodshed and bring unity. It rather becomes the fuel added to the burning fire of conflict. It has not been able to hold the relations falling apart.

Violence is the primary trait of any war. Violence is displayed in different forms. Physical and psychological violence during the war pushed the people further to the edge of destruction and devastation in Nigeria. Violence was not only happening in the battlefield, but also everywhere in streets and malls. Violence is aimed

in particular at the weaker section of the society, namely women, children and the minority. There is no exception to this in Nigeria. Women have been sexually abused to humiliate the other community. Children are the other vulnerable victims of violence. The physical violence includes shooting down enemy soldiers in the battle zone, butchering and lynching neighbors who belong to other religious community, massacring the innocents, etc.

The psychological violence includes abusing and exploiting women sexually and causing lifelong wounds on the victim and victim's community. Forced displacement and forced living in refugee camps, where food is scarce, is another form of violence where people starve to death. The soldiers are shot point blank, the bullets tearing open the chest. They are killed like ants. Children are recruited to quantify the strength of army. Many innocent people are amputated and left with no help. Towards the end of the war in the Southeast region, the minority community is at the mercy of the enemy. Persons from the minority community are killed mercilessly just because they belong to a different religious community. Women, children and minority were the easy targets of nonstop violence during the Nigerian civil war.

The situation is worse in a patriarchal society than it is in any other kind of society. Adichie explores the themes of human beings propensity for violence, propensity for the betrayal of love, trust, friendship and country; and the disposition for child soldiering. She takes great pain to portray the historical truths of the brutalities and effects of war. The gruesome scenes of killing and eviscerating pregnant women, raping young girls and other kinds of atrocities are told in a style reminiscent of the past.

Chimamanda Adichie tries to humanize the characters that are stripped of their humanity in the war ravaged Biafra. Vultures and dead bodies were dumped

outside the city of Kano. Adichie goes deep into the horrendous conflict. Adichie compares similar incidents of violence that took place in different parts of the world during different wars. Human depravity is further accentuated when Richard witnesses the butchering at the Kano airport. They left to die in wilderness and some of them are tied to the iron cross and are thrown away. Adichie humanizes the ravaging effect of the war on the minds of various characters. She is able to handle the historical truths of the brutalities and impacts of war without making it a melodrama. Adichie believes women suffer various forms of domestic and public violence to a great extent because of the mindless social and religious constructs. This form of gender violence occurring in many parts of the world within a home or in a wider community affects women and girls disproportionately.

The violence against women is realized as domestic violence, rape, sexual violence during the conflict harmful customary practices like forced marriages, and genital mutilation. A discussion about the emergence of various feminist theories is necessary to understand gender violence and the reaction to it by the feminists. The radical feminists blame the patriarchy and the oppressive social system. They challenge the existing patriarchal power and try to overturn it. They are concerned with women's rights rather than gender equality.

The lack of accessibility to the means of production and women's economic dependence has pushed them into the position of subjugation. Liberal feminism, on the other hand, fights for gender equality and wants to get women's rights by all means. Liberal feminists stress that all people are created equal and that culture and general attitude are responsible for promoting gender conflict. The radical feminism denounces the patriarchal family system and views sexism at the core of patriarchal oppression. It focuses on violence against women in the form of rape, sexual

harassment, domestic violence, and so on. Adichie has proved to be a female supremacist by portraying two women, Olanna and Kainene, always enjoying supremacy over their male counterparts. The female supremacists wish for the independence of women which they believe will lead to balance emotions, sharing and healthy inter-dependence between men and women.

Adichie narrates how women suffer in their homes as well as in society through their demoralizing humiliation at the hands of enemy. Women are the softest targets and by attacking them one can easily demoralize the enemy group. It is the gang rape or mass rape which traumatizes the victims for a long period. Many young girls are gang raped in both the camps of the army stationed. Ugwu himself, known for his innocence and honesty before entering the army, changes and becomes part of a gang that have raped young girls. Many women are missing from the camp. Kainene disappears and never returns. Till the end of the novel nobody knows where Kainene is. Women are not shown as too vulnerable. Kainene refuses to be mistress to the minister to win favour for her family. She resists inspite of the tremendous pressure from her parents. It is a pity that Kainene's parents are ready to mortgage her for government contracts. This avaricious attitude is well expressed in the following words:

‘So will you be spreading your legs for that elephant in exchange for Daddy’s contract?’ Kainene asked. ‘Daddy literally pulled me away from the veranda, so we could leave you alone with the good cabinet minister,’ Kainene said. ‘Will he give Daddy the contract then?’ ‘He didn’t say. But it’s not as if he will get nothing. Daddy will give him ten percent after all.’ ‘The ten percent is standard, so extras always help. The other bidders probably don’t have a beautiful daughter.’ Kainene dragged the word out until it sounded cloying, sticky: beau-ti-ful (35).

Survival becomes the critical purpose of everyone during the conflict. The women have to face great odds. They are pushed to the corner. Women are not only abused by the enemy group, but also by their own people as they become vulnerable at the time of war. The women are shown superior in the first part of the novel as the lady characters never yield to temptation of power or the force of the patriarchal parents and always have equal footing with their 'live in' husbands. However, they become helpless during and after the civil war. Olanna takes care of the baby and other domestic work like cooking and washing. Kainene also accepts Richard and her sister meekly and goes for hunting food and survival. The civil war fought on the line of ethnicity and the religious divide is a great burden on women. They become the target of both the warring groups.

In any war children also suffer at the hands of both the warring groups. Children are either recruited in the army to show the strength or killed indiscriminately in the battlefield. Children are silent sufferers in any kind of conflict. Children are exploited in different ways during the civil war in Nigeria. Both the Nigerian and the Biafra armies recruit children to take part in the battles. Ugwu is also part of the molestations and gang rapes taking place during the war. Many young children have learned to play war games in school campus with the guns made from bamboo. Children look just ten or eleven years old and wear banana leaves on their head. Children also fling stones to each other. It is so pathetic to see the elders watching and cheering at the children playing war games.

Starvation is an effective tool successfully employed by warring groups to win the war at any cost. It is not new to humanity. War has been practiced since the crusades. Starvation fulfils a twin purpose it weakens the enemy's forces in the battle and quickens the end of the war. In the Nigerian civil war, both the warring groups

followed this strategy. The Federal forces successfully forced embargo on Biafra, blocking all supplies, both from the neighboring countries and from the international organizations. The economic blockade weakened the Biafra forces and many soldiers died of starvation. In addition, children became mal-nutritional due to lack of essential mineral and food supply. Women also lost weight and became weak.

There are many incidents in the novel that suggest the starvation imposed by the Nigerian army, and the delay tactic of the Biafra rulers ruined lives. People not only starve for food and water but they also starve for love, sex and other relationships. An empty stomach cannot understand freedom, independence and patriotism of any other ideals. The more there is lack of food, the more there is loss of idealism and optimism. The only thing left is struggle to survive. Everything undergoes change when the conflict begins. The abundance recedes.

The nation is left with starving people. People carry empty stomach. Ugwu who once enjoyed sumptuous food has to put up with puffy rice and corn meal that never emerged smooth after stirred in hot water; and the powdered milk ended up as stubborn clumps at the bottom of tea cups. People rush and fight over meager food supply. They stand in queue for long hours and days to get a loaf of bread or biscuits. Biafra has become a starving landscape where people die without food and soldiers are unable to fight any longer. Lack of food and search for it have become an obsession with the victims of the war. Togetherness at the dining table is lost and replaced by haughty talks and gossips. Starvation is used as a weapon of war by Nigeria. It has brought to the notice of the world, the civil war and the starving people there. It has made the world to realize and help the starving people there. It has made the world to realize and help the starving people by providing food. Many nations came forward to help starving Biafra at that time.

Olanna stands in the queue to get food which makes her feel uncomfortable. Olanna's child baby has to eat egg yolk. The officer in the relief camp recognized her and helped her with a bag of egg yolk. The next day, after struggling to reach the end of the queue, she managed to get a clunk beef. However, she was surrounded by a group of soldiers who haunted her bag and left her crying. Starvation has been the easy mode of weapon used tactfully to defeat the enemy from the past to the present. The ultimate suffers are the common people, especially women and children.

CHAPTER FOUR

REPERCUSSIONS OF WAR

Post-colonial literary movement is a movement that started after the Second World War. Many countries that were under colonization got independence, writers from sub-regions emerged. Example of such countries are India, Caribbean, South Africa, Nigeria etc. In Nigeria, post-colonial literature are works that are written during colonialism or after independence of the country. Frantz Fanon in 1961 wrote a book called *The Wretched of the Earth* in French, which examines the anti-colonial violence that was happening or happened after colonization all over the world. He also ascertains that children should be taught history from the beginning before colonization and there shouldn't be differences between the blacks and the whites.

Another post-colonial literary theorist who changed the world's view is Edward Said whose greatest contribution to the world is the publication of his book *Orientalism* published in 1978. According to him, the word "Orientalism" is a western conception

about the eastern part of the world. As he wrote “Orientalism”, it was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar and the strange. Oriental is a person who is represented as feminine and weak, incomparable to the whites who are masculine and strong. Edward Said mentioned that the westerners divided the world into two parts: the east and the west, orient and the occident’s. They lay the basis of the concept of “them” and “us”.

Orient applies to all that is eastern and occident applies to all that is western. These concepts are opposite to each other like male and female, master and slave, colonized and colonizer etc. According to Edward Said, colonialism is a powerful instrument which differentiates between Europeans and non-Europeans. The purpose of orientalism is to enhance and to strengthen the interests of imperialism or strengthen the imperial practice. Edward Said used Michael Foucault’s notion of “discourse” to define Orientalism. Foucault said orientalism as a colonial discourse becomes a powerful instrument to give knowledge about culture and civilization, history and other colonial discourse can be understood by looking at the relationship between colonizers and colonized. Colonial discourse is a form of knowledge in which colonial people would be able to understand themselves.

The gathering at Odenigbo’s house brings about the role of identity and politics in postcolonial Nigeria. In the house young people gather to discuss the political future of the country. In the meeting, the importance of several kinds of African system of government is discussed amongst the educated people like Odenigbo and his friends. Odenigbo has always tried to defend the ideal unity for Africans, and his colleagues have stressed upon the pan Africanism or nationalism. Odenigbo said the white people have always claimed that they are the one that created what is called Nigeria. Odenigbo used to say the real African man has existed since before the white man came, according

to Odenigbo they created what is called “black” as much as possible in order to differentiate themselves with the white man. The role of identity can also be seen in the character of Kainene. She was given a name which was partial since her birth because she is not as beautiful as her sister which makes her lose identity in the family, and she always feels out-casted.

The Nigerian politics after independence of the country is said to be unstable because of the Igbo's think that the Northerners have occupied all the major parts in the government offices and have filled the country with corruption. This has resulted in the loss of identity of Igbo's who feel that they are not a part of the country any more. In the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Professor Ezeka said “It was mostly Northerners who were in government, Professor Ezeka whispered” (125). In trying to find their real identity Ojukwu, fought against the government. He had no arms, no weapons to fight: only wooden sticks. He deceived and risked so many lives that depended on him. Kainene said that “Madu told me today that the army has nothing, absolutely nothing. They thought Ojukwu had arms piled up somewhere, given the way he has been talking” (183).

The postcolonial Africa is in confusion since independence, just like Edward Said has also stated the idea about “identity”, the characters in the novel are in search of their identity which has been ruined by the Europeans and led to so many deaths in the novel scenario. Even though the Europeans are not in the country they indirectly controlled the people using their manipulative way. The westerners have a great influence on Biafran war but there is subtle critique found in Richard's character. Richard's intention is clean. Adichie trying to show that not all the westerners are bad. He tries very hard to be a part of Nigeria and later part of Biafra too. His interest with

the culture is also something good, he speaks for Biafra and also tries to help them, he also wrote to the Western press.

Adichie shows her talent in creating a character that will make the Europeans not feel bad. The westerners are not in the country but all that is being taught in schools are planned by them. When Odenigbo was relating to Ugwu what will happen in his school: this is a clear domination of the Europeans, what Ugwu will be taught in the school and what he must say to pass his examination. The following lines explain regarding a white man who discovered a river and it mentions about how it was discovered long back and how it was in use. "They will teach you that a white man called Mango Park discovered River Niger, which is rubbish, our people fished in the Niger long before Mango Park's grandfather was born, Odenigbo" (11).

Susan is real representation of the westerner's conception of the orients. Through her, Adichie draws the map of how they look at all the orients. The westerners are living in Nigeria like Susan, owning most of the wealth and still referring or calling them as savages and uncivilized, "The people were bloody beggars, be prepared for their body odours and the way will stand and stare at you...never show weakness to domestic staff" (54). Edward Said has assumed on cultural hegemony that the westerners have always been considered to be superior and the easterners as inferior. Major Madu asked Richard to write a letter to the British in order to voice out their sufferings for external support. He asked him to do that because according to him they will be listened to, if a Westerner is in support of them, the Europeans would help them.

The Westerners are also seen as superiors because the Biafrans think that if they will support them, everything would be settled. Just because of Richard's letter two journalists were sent away from England to Nigeria. They considered one dead European man to be equal to one hundred black men. One of the journalist who were

sent to Nigeria said that the African women are said to have sexual transmitted disease and it is through this instance Adichie shows how the Europeans look at the African women. Another European journalist also said the blacks don't have the sense of what to eat, just because he saw Biafran children eating roasted rats. He didn't think that they were in war and don't have food and meat to eat but only rats and lizards as substitute of meat. In the novel the characters suffer the issue of violence because of the war.

Adichie uses the theme of humanity to voice out the issue of civil war. The characters struggle with the issue of love, class, race, profession etc. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a novel that two different things come together; fiction co-exist with war. Adichie through the characters has shown the clear picture of the Biafran war, one is made to travel to the time. The characters have suffered because of the violence which was caused by the civil war. Violence is first introduced in the first part of the novel, was caused by the civil war. Violence is first introduced in the first part of the novel, Adichie opens the book as a comic one, with Ugwu and his Aunt on the way to his new masters house but at the end of part one, she introduces a book called *The World Was Silent When We Died*; this creates a new atmosphere to the reader, the novel which looks like a happy novel now looks different.

After the first coup, two weeks later the Northerners comes into power, this was the appearance of violence in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Kainene heard in the radio that so many Igbo's were killed in the north, Zaria, Kano and Kaduna; Kainene became worried because her childhood friend Major Madu is in the north, they try contacting him but they were unable. Kainene's friend Colonel Udochi Ekechi was killed in the north. Major Madu escaped; he narrates how Kainene had suffered, so many of his friends were killed, his friend: a Hausa man helped him he took him to his cousin's house where he spent some days in the chicken room and then escaped in water tank,

which almost killed him. According to Kainene so many innocent men were killed, even Udochi who does not care about tribalism, who speaks Hausa fluently and never encourages the coup, was also killed. Odenigbo heard in the news that over five hundred Igbos were killed in Maiduguri. Some men also come to the village and narrated what they had seen in the railway station. Odenigbo asked Ugwu to take some bread to the railway station to the wounded who had escaped from the north, the first man which Ugwu saw was wounded on the head with knife and the second had lost his right eye, this is an extreme violence caused by the war.

Olanna who was in Kano was rescued by her ex-boyfriend Muhammad. She visited Kano in order to bring her cousin sister Arize who was due to give birth, Olanna wanted Arize to give birth in Nsukka, but unfortunately the war caught her there. Muhammad asked Arize to put on the Muslim Hijab, so that Arize would not be recognized, Muhammad took her immediately to the railway station so that Arize would be able to escape. On their way Arize insisted on going to Sabongari to check on her Uncle's family. She saw her uncle and his wife's body lying on the ground dead, blood was running all over the place, the entire street was covered with blood. Olanna in the train saw so many people injured, she met a woman carrying calabash. The woman later opened the calabash, Olanna saw the head of a baby still plaited new, the violence did not only affect adults, but children were also killed, Olanna looked into the bowl; she saw the little girl's head with ash grey skin and rolled eyes and open mouth. The mother said "Do you know, she said, it took me long time to plait her hair! She had such thick hair (149).

Such were the great struggles of the characters which were caused by the war in the novel. People were killed innocently because of the so called "BIAFRAN WAR", the war did not bring any good to the country; it only led to their suffering and so many

killings. Another incident of violence was the one Richard encountered when he was coming back from London and he branched in Kano, he met a young man called Nnaemeka, with whom he had some talk a few minutes, the man was full of dreams, he told him that his family depended on him, just because he was an Igbo man, they killed so many people in the plane at that time.

When the war was declared, Odenigbo and his family had to leave everything in Nsukka, for their safety, they moved to Abba his parental village. Odenigbo and Olanna had to leave everything in Nsukka, they only packed little that they needed. Olanna's parents also left Lagos to London. So many people started leaving their cities to the village because of the Nigerian army had spread all over the town of Nsukka. Moreover Odenigbo's family had to leave Abba because it was not safe anymore, he begged his mother to follow them to escape but she refused, they went to Umuahia where they stay for some time.

Olanna and Odenigbo in the midst of their suffering decided to marry, Odenigbo had always dreamt of a grand wedding, but because of the war they only invited few people. On the day of the wedding after the marriage in a "tiny church", there was bomb; people gathered for the wedding ran for their lives, there was no reception because everything was ruined. Olanna was not happy because no one in her family attended the wedding. Lack of support from other countries, they all supported the Nigerian government, which tried to eradicate the Biafran, even France which sold some weapons to the Biafran did not support or recognize Biafra. This is the reason that led to the downfall of Biafra and violence. Olanna grew up in a luxurious home with abundance of everything. Olanna had to cope with the situation because she intentionally refused to follow her parents, and instead she followed Odenigbo. Baby became sick and Olanna was disturbed thinking that the child will die, money became

problem for the Biafran because of the new currency they had introduced which they called the “Biafran pounds”, and Olanna had to follow a long queue for her to be able to get the money. Mrs. Mukelu brought some egg yolk, which they gave to baby and it helped her to regain her health. Olanna had to follow a long queue to get those dried egg yolk. She met a man whom she knew, who collected the egg yolk for her and gave her some corn beef she thought of cooking it for her family, but some group of Biafran soldiers followed her and snatched the corn beef from her.

The war ruined their lives, food became scarce, and rice was not available in the market because not all people could afford to buy it. Hunger became rampant everywhere, the office that provided food for them didn’t give them every day, so the day the food was not given; the children stayed with hunger. The war did not only affect the adults but also teenagers and children. It corrupted the mind of the children with bad thoughts. Olanna in her class introduced the Biafran flag with its meaning, which had three colours, “red was the blood of the siblings massacred in the north, black was for mourning them, green was for the prosperity Biafra would have...” (281). A girl in her class when submitting her drawing said she would kill the vandals. Olanna felt bad and guilty for teaching the girl all this, which she later complained to Odenigbo. This was misleading and teaching violence to young children to hate the northerners; this would lead to another problem.

The violence had gone to the extent that Umuahia was also not safe and so many schools were closed and turned into refugee camp, there was no living school. This was bad, the children no longer could go to school; education became history in their cities. In the refugee camp Ugwu met so many people that made him feel sad. A woman narrated that she was in the market when the war started, she was only able to escape with the clothes on her body, the baby she backed and some money she had for selling

pepper, she ran and left all her children because she was not allowed to go back home, she doesn't know what had happened to them, Ugwu pitied her. He also smelt something awful. He then realized that one woman had used water in a bowl for so many days to wash her cassava. This is true cruelty not only hunger is the problem but also hygiene, the water caused so many harmful diseases, which led to their death. Port Harcourt was considered to be Biafra's support and strong army.

Kainene and Richard lived there, rumour spread that it would also soon fall, they didn't believe at first, but one afternoon they were attacked and one of their houseboy was killed called Ikejide. Kainene was left in great shock because she saw the boy's head separated from his body. This was the reason why they left for Orlu, where she had bought a new house. There she met a man who could do carpentry work, without him asking her for money, he told her that he only needed food to survive. In the country of Biafra, money was a waste. One wouldn't be able to buy anything even if had the money, "Why don't you want money? Kainene asked him "what will I buy with money" he asked" (317).

Kainene and Richard also helped some people in one refugee camp; they gave them food and even called doctors for them. There was also a pastor in the camp who preached the people to give them some hope. The war also started to take a new dimension; besides hunger people started to lose their manners. Odenigbo was asked to vacate his two room apartment because the landlord had got a new tenant who would pay twice the money, accommodation started becoming problem for the people. They got a house which had nine rooms, one bathroom and toilet; almost all the people in the house were refugees. "There were too many people in the yard; a family of sixteen lived in the room next to Mama Oji, the bathroom floor was slimy with too much dirt washed off too many bodies" (326).

There was over population in the compound which made the tenants aware of all what other people were doing, there was no privacy at all. Olanna's room was next to the toilet, it was unbearable for her at first because of the smell. She always wished there was a fan in their room. There was no electricity at all, unlike the house they left; she had never experienced such in her life. She also met uneducated and uncivilized people, first was Mama Oji, who thought that being a doctor meant medical doctor, until Olanna explained to her that Odenigbo was not a medical doctor but book doctor. Also because of overpopulation the compound became so noisy, whenever Mama Oji was fighting with her husband; she doesn't allow them to rest because of her shouting.

Olanna also had to endure the Pastor's loud praying which he did all the time. There was also a girl who played piano every day, her name was Alice, she also disturbed Olanna because her room was next to hers, they also followed queue when they had to go to the toilet. Kainene ran a refugee camp where she helped the people to get medicines, crayfish and some food stuffs which was serves as a great help to them. When Olanna visited her, she took her around some of the refugee camp, Olanna was shocked on seeing how people were dying, mothers dying leaving their children. She felt pity for them, according to Kainene countless people die every day.

Kwashiorkor, also known as "edematous malnutrition" because of its association with edema is a nutritional disorder most often seen in regions experiencing famine. It is a form of malnutrition caused by a lack of protein in the diet. Kwashiorkor became everywhere, at the compound of Olanna, a girl Adanna had a fever and she realized it was kwashiorkor and gave her some milk. In the camp they visited, they also saw so many children with the disease; Kainene told her that it was lack of protein. Innocent young teenagers were dragged to the war field because in 1968 many of the

Biafran men were killed. Ugwu is also dragged on the road, without asking for his opinion they forced him inside the lorry.

Ugwu is shocked when he met a young boy who was not more than thirteen years, the boy was drinking alcohol, this was very bad. The boy that was supposed to be in school under the care of his parents, but he drank alcohol and was exposed to danger of war. The name of the boy is “high tech”, the boy is so proud of himself that he is a warrior, it is childishness because he thinks that everything is a game. The war has not brought any good but rather the fall of the Igbo society. The children do not only suffer separation from their parents but also they were also exposed to wrong doings, they do not know its disadvantages. Their schools were also turned into training centers for the Biafran soldiers. Ugwu was taken to the centre. Ugwu’s first experience shows the sign of brutality, which is the first part of his struggles.

The skinny soldier –with no boots, no uniform, no half of a yellow sun on their sleeves- kicked and slapped and mocked Ugwu during physical training. The parade left Ugwu’s arm stiff. The obstacles training left his calves throbbing. The rope climbing left his palms bleeding (359).

Ugwu also realized what Professor Ekwenugo described about what the battalions have for the war, he was so happy at first to be among the battalions who would fight for Biafra, but was disappointed because they didn’t have the weapons to fight the vandals, that is why so many of the Biafran army were killed, “But when he went to the first training session, he stared at what was before him: a dull metal container full of scrap metal” (359). Ugwu then realized that they were just offering themselves to be killed because they didn’t have guns. The boys together with Ugwu were bullied all the time. Eberechi Ugwu’s friend, whom he secretly loves, is someone that was exposed to prostitution, she was sold to the soldier, in exchange of money

because of poverty and also the commander helped her brother to join the army. This is the struggle the women in the novel suffered; they were exposed to men because of poverty, some of the girls take themselves willingly to the soldiers in the camp, the young girls that are supposed to be in school or married became prostitutes, this was the effect of war. Ugwu said “Sometimes younger women come and went in the commander’s quarters and emerged with sheepish smiles” (360).

The young boys are not only exposed to drinking alcohol, but also to smoking of weeds, marijuana and so on. The war spoilt the behaviour of the young children, they smoke in front of the commander and he always felt happy and praised them, and the young soldiers are also exposed to robbery. They rob and maltreat the civilians; they even beat some and collect their money. On their way to the bar Ugwu and his friends stopped a man in his car, even after showing them his Biafran identity movement card, they didn’t listen, they slapped and collected his car keys and drove away, this is the struggle they have to go through; they have to live in that way for them to survive.

Ugwu said “He was not living life but life was living him” (364). They were all not happy with their lives but had to endure it due to circumstances. They arrived in the bar, got drunk and gang raped the bar girl, together with the thirteen year old boy high tech, this is the effect of war. Ugwu never wanted to do it, but because he didn’t want them to tease him and call him someone that is disabled that is why he joined. Muhammad wrote to Olanna and sent her some gifts which she shared with some of her neighbours. The only person that eats thrice is Baby; they only eat once or twice a day. Olanna used to pity Odenigbo because he is man who likes fashion and also drinks the best beer, but he now only drinks the local gin, he smells bad and has only two shirts and a trouser.

Alice the girl, who lived in the same compound with Olanna, told Olanna that all her family members were killed by the vandals. Her state had also fallen, she cried a lot when she was narrating the story. Even though Kainene tried her best but the situation becomes so bad, the children in the camp now eat only once in a day, and the food is “garri”. The suppliers were not able to cross mobs to find some garri for the refugees. Hunger started becoming worst; they now eat lizards as meat. They also don’t have water to use, talk less of taking bath. Kainene is so worried because the refugees now smell badly, she even asked them to use orange from the tree to drink and rub it on the back of their bodies, according to her the scent of the orange will reduce the smell of their bodies. The Southeast of Nigeria, has the highest rainfall in the country, because of the heavy rainfall it becomes almost impossible for the people to do farming extensively, which makes them rely mostly on the North for grains of food such as rice, maize etc. So when the Nigerian government commanded all the roads of supplying of food for the Biafran to be blocked, the food became scarce, they were not able to farm; this increased the rate of hunger during the war.

Ugwu was luckily rescued by some thugs, he suffered a lot during the war and everyone had thought that he had died. After the thugs took him, they didn’t give him water, which made him wish to have died than been denied water, he spent days without water. He has wounds all over his body that made it impossible for him to be able to move his body. He was taken to the hospital where he saw so many wounded people. The issue of adultery became rampant during the war, this is seen in the refugee camp in Orlu, and one girl was impregnated by an elderly person, who used to sleep with girls in exchange of stock fish. Ugwu who always poked nose in all that is going on around him became very quiet after coming back from the war, he no longer wants to hear people talking about the war, and he usually sits alone and talks to himself.

Adichie in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* tries to show how the characters took love in the novel, how their love is shattered, and also shows how strong real love is how one that is in love can sacrifice for the other. Love is a natural phenomenon that happens between two people, love is something that cannot be pretended, it exists naturally. Normally when two people are in love they sacrifice for each other.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

The action in *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie takes place in 1960s in Nigeria which is the setting and the context referred. The narrative techniques shift from a third person objective point of view and the first person point of view when characters begin to narrate the events. The tone and mood is tragic and

violent. The protagonist are Odenigbo, Olanna and her sister while the soldiers in the opposite camp are the antagonist. The major conflict is between the two tribes that end up fighting in the Nigerian civil war.

The story reaches its climax when the civil war starts. When in the beginning of the novel Odenigbo talks with his friends about revolution and other massacres foreshadows the events that will take place in Nigeria. When one of Odenigbo's friends claim that Olanna is not intelligent and is just a fake because of her British accent proves to be an understatement as Olanna proves herself to be intelligent and resourceful. Some of the Nigerian extremists rejected everything that had to do with the Western world, including the Nigerians who have been influenced by the Western way of thinking. Because of this, Olanna has a hard time being accepted by Odenigbo's friends because for them, she is too western. This alludes to the idea that the Nigerian saw not only the white people as being dangerous but their way of life as well. The most important imagery in the novel is when Olanna describes a woman carrying the severed head of her child.

The image is important because it exemplifies just how cruel the war was and how much it affected the normal population. In this first chapter, Odenigbo tells Ugwu that he will enroll him in the staff primary school so he could learn how to read, write and receive a basic education. Odenigbo tells Ugwu from the beginning that he will receive a double education: one directed by the British and real knowledge. This seems paradoxical but when analyzing the situation one could see that the British influenced education greatly in the colonies they had. To support the claim that they discovered a certain land first, they had to teach the children that the territory they invaded was unpopulated. This however is a lie because indigenous people lived on those land for hundreds of years before being colonized by European powers.

Adichie draws a parallel between Odenigbo and Ugwu, the two main characters of the novel. Both are Nigerians but they were raised different and so Ugwu never got the chance to be educated in the same way as Odenigbo was. Because of this, the two have different belief systems and see the world is completely different way. Ugwu is superstitious and continues to believe in the power of the spirits and in the power of magical herbs and plants. Odenigbo on other hand broke free from the old traditions and even considers himself as being an atheist. The idea transmitted through this parallel is that the environment influences a person's belief system more than some would be inclined to believe.

Adichie in the novel shows how the characters struggle because of dying of their culture. The story opens with Ugwu's Auntie telling him about his master. He has spent most of his time on reading books of overseas according to her, hardly returns greetings, this is entirely something different in relation to the tradition of the Igbo society; they respect greetings and always return greetings. The idea of Ugwu's attraction to his cousin sister is totally different from Igbo culture, it can be said that going to the primary school in his village corrupted his mind. Ugwu's master asked him to call him with his first name which is totally absurd and unacceptable in his villages, he felt awkward because he never calls his elders with their first name. Ugwu never got the courage to call him with his first name till the end of the novel. Ugwu's aunt describes the women in the university, she says they are always with wigs and mini-skirts.

The traditional village people do not put on mini-skirt that is why she is telling him because it is something new he will see. Miss Adebayo a friend to Odenigbo who always comes to their meeting every Saturdays in his house together with other lecturers, has some manners which is also very difficult to the traditional African woman, Miss Adebayo's way of talking is different because she raises her voice above

all the men present in the meeting which Ugwu finds inappropriate, but because she is an educated person, she feels what she is doing is right. Olanna's parents meeting with the minister Chief Okonji is also something disgraceful, instead of the parents to look for a young and handsome man to marry their daughters to, but rather they want to push her to sleep with an old man, the age mate partner of her father. Adichie has shown how the characters struggle for identity, which was lost by the politics of the country and the intervention of the westerners in postcolonial Africa.

The struggle for safeguarding human values was something very hard for the characters in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, they suffered violence because of the war, and their values as human being was taken away because of the war. The characters also suffered degradation of human values in the field of love between themselves. The study has shown that war is not the final solution to all problems but is just a way of deteriorating the society. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is not completely fictional because Adichie has gone back through history and presents what had happened forty years ago in Nigeria; she has shown how war has affected and destroyed the country's happiness.

Adichie shows the romantic relationship of the characters in the novel, the love between the two sisters - Olanna and Kainene, Olanna and Odenigbo, Richard and Kainene, Ugwu's love to Nnesinachi and Eberechi. The love in the novel is being affected naturally or due to the political uproar. Olanna comes from a rich house, her father is a rich business man, but the issue of love in the house is absent, Olanna feels more comfortable when she visits her uncle's house in Kano, even though they are not rich but there is an atmosphere of peace and unity which is bounded by love. Their life is simple they are not faking life like her parents, this makes Olanna and Kainene to distant themselves from their so-called "rich family". Odenigbo's house is a paradise to Olanna because of the love they share between themselves, even though sometimes

he stays in the library for the whole day to study. Susan's love for Richard is real but he has to leave her because he doesn't feel the same, Susan has to struggle because of her love for him.

Adichie divided her story into three sections. In the second phase, the sisters share some bond of love not like in the first section and also Kainene wrote to Richard longing to see him, this is showing that something must have happened in one way or the other. Ugwu from the start of the novel has a strong attraction to girls. As a child he had fallen in love with his cousin Nnesinachi whom he was attracted to because of her beauty, was attracted by her looks, and had always wanted to touch her. Nnesinachi is a cousin to him but his mother told him that she is like a real sister, which makes it impossible for him to have her, Ugwu has to suffer separation of love because Nnesinachi has to leave for Kano to stay with her uncle's family. Ugwu later met Chinyere, whom he never had feelings for but have sex with and always imagine her to be Nnesinachi.

Ugwu falls in love with Eberechi, he loves her but was more attracted to her body, she has a round buttocks. Ugwu's love for Nnesinachi and Eberechi is shattered because of the war; he is separated from Eberechi and taken to war. Odenigbo's love is disintegrated because of the war, he became an addict, he neither talks to Olanna nor smiles to her. In Kaniene's house he talks arrogantly and Olanna said that he has not been himself since the beginning of the war, the love of the couples was taken away. Odenigbo does not even have time to talk to his wife. Odenigbo became a little insane, not repaying Olanna for what she did, she would have followed her parents to England but she stays with him. Olanna has to struggle because of his change of attitude, "I want this war to end so that he can come back, and he has become somebody else" (388).

The absence of love in Olanna's family was the reason her father cheated on their mother, when Olanna went to talk to her father about the issue, there was emptiness of closeness between her and him, she pitied them all, and their life; "Olanna felt a sudden pity for him, for her mother, for herself and Kainene" (219). Even though Odenigbo betrayed Olanna and she also did the same but the strong bond of love between them is unbreakable, she forgives him and also adopts his daughter as hers. The love between Kainene and Richard is also alluring in the book.

Adichie is trying to pass on to the people that will try one day to take revenge on what has been done to their ancestors. Adichie has tried to be objective in her approach of her novel, she has not been biased in one way or the other, and she has shown everything that happened. She has presented how tribes in Nigeria view the incident of 1967. She tries to show more clarity of what really happened, not a mere guess of everything that had happened. The Nigerian civil war is still a painful event because it has touched so many people and also affected the nation as whole. Adichie told the story as a form reconciliation of what happened during the reign of General Gowon. The story is said to be a success because the reader is able to travel four decades ago and feel and see what the people have gone through. Adichie presents the historical line of the Nigerian history, the war which led to violence and deaths of so many innocent people in the country.

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Struggles of Self- Actualization in Ntozake Shange's *Choreopoem "for colored girls who have considered suicide when rainbow is enuf"*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Crisis of Self and Actualization	13
Three	Trauma of Silence	25
Four	Techniques as Expressions	35
Five	Summation	46
	Works Cited	52

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled submitted **Struggles of Self-Actualization in Ntozake Shange's *Choreopoem for colored girls who have considered suicide when rainbow is enuf*** to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Bala Yoga Meena. B during the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Ms. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Dr. S. Sudha Rani

Guide

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Struggles of Self- Actualization in Ntozake Shange's *Choreopoem "for colored girls who have considered suicide when rainbow is enuf"*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmanian Sundaranar University for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature, is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

Bala Yoga Meena. B

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Struggles of Self- Actualization in Ntozake Shange's *Choreopoem "for colored girls who have considered suicide when rainbow is enuf"*** highlights the journey of the author and also Black women's struggle to gain self-actualization. It leads to the realization that self-actualization and hope in Black woman's life.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Ntozake Shange, her life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of his work and the poetry book chosen for the study.

The second chapter **Crisis of Self and Actualization** deals with the exploration on the crisis and conflicts faced by African American woman. It also reflects author's life struggle and her intention to write poetry.

The third chapter **Trauma of Silence** focuses on the psychological trauma faced by African American women. It also explores how alienation and racial identity cause psychological impact in the minds of colored women.

The fourth chapter **Techniques as Expressions** concentrates on the writing technique of Shange, her narrative and style of writing. It also explores author's expressions over African American society.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It also presents the views employed by the writer and validates the study.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

African literature has its beginning from the work of escaped slaves, which called as slave narratives. This type of writings are the reflections of the writer's own experience toward freedom and slavery. The best known slave narratives like better known as *The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (1789). Meanwhile oral traditions were also spread among the literature which has given form and substance to much subsequent literature by African writers. The African literature started with writers like Phillis Wheatley of 18th century. The great renaissance started in Africa with a movement named Harlem Renaissance. It marked the beginning in literature and the arts, influenced both by writers who came North in the Great Migration and those who were immigrants from Jamaica and other Caribbean islands. The African-American writers mirrors the social inequality between Americans and Africans, racism, slavery and other themes. African-American literature has both been influenced by the great African diasporic heritage. African-American literature began to be defined and analyzed. A number of scholars and writers are generally credited with helping to promote and define African-American literature as a genre during this time period, including fiction writers like Toni Morrison and Alice Walker and poet James Emanuel.

James Emanuel was considered to be the pioneer of the study of African American poetry by editing with Theodore Gross, *Dark Symphony: Negro Literature in America* (1968), a collection of black writings. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, African-American poetry and fiction began to develop in two distinctly

different ways. Many poets began to emerge including Claude McKay and Langston Hughes after Harlem Renaissance. McKay is generally regarded as the first major poet of the Harlem Renaissance. While McKay and Hughes embraced the rank and file of Black America and proudly identified themselves as Black poets, Cullen sought success through writing in traditional forms and employing a lyricism. After that follows poets like Alice Walker, Gwendolyn Brooks, Margaret Esse Danner and Naomi Long Madgett. The development of an increasingly Black-identified poetry in the 1960s, written deliberately to inspire Black pride and to inflame Black revolution, is epitomized in the evolution of LeRoi Jones into Amiri Baraka. The Black Art's Movement began with the assassination of Malcolm X, the eloquent exponent of Black nationalism, in 1965 in New York. This helped to galvanize a generation of young Black writers into rethinking the purpose of African American art. To Black Arts writers, literature was frankly a means of exhortation, and poetry was the most immediate way to model and articulate the new Black consciousness.

On the other side African women writers started to write and place their mark in literature. The Black women's literary renaissance of the 1970 expanded the presence of Black women's experience and expressive traditions in African American writing. The outpouring of creative energy in women writers was seen in their works. Toni was not the only Black woman to exert a major influence on African American literature in the 1970s and '80s. Writers like Alice Walker and Maya Angelou were also popular among the readers. The success of Morrison and Walker helped other writers to explore the intricate themes of race, gender, and class in a wide range of literary forms such as the poetry of Audre Lorde, June Jordan, Rita Dove and Ntozake Shange.

Ntozake Shange is an American poet, playwright, performance artist, and novelist. Her works based on the contemporary experience of black woman has earned her reputation as a powerful American feminist and literary figure. She was born as Paulette Linda Williams in New Jersey. Shange studied in a white school where she endured racism and racist attacks at the city of St.Louis. These experiences later went on to heavily influence her work. Her family had a strong interest in arts and artistic education. Cultural icons such as Dizzie Gillespie, Miles Davis, and W.E.B. DuBois were regular guests in the Williams home. During her school days at Morristown High School, she wrote many poems centred on black themes and subjects. In 1966, Shange attended Barnard College and the University of Southern California, earning both a BA and MA in American Studies. Shange's personal life frustrated her and made her college days difficult and miserable. Due to her marital dispute, she attempted suicide several times before focusing her rage against the limitations society imposed on Black women. After completing her master degree, she reaffirmed her personal strength. In 1971, Shange adopted her Zulu name, *Ntozake* meaning she comes with her own things and *Shange* meaning who walks like a lion. In an interview with Allan Wallach in *Newsday* she says of the name change that it was due, in part, to her belief that she was "living a lie": " [I was] living in a world that defied reality as most black people, or most white people, understood it—in other words, feeling that there was something that I could do, and then realizing that nobody was expecting me to do anything because I was colored and I was also female, which was not very easy to deal with". (378)

Shange is an educator, performer/director, and writer whose work drew heavily on her experiences of being a Black female in America. She wrote many famous works like *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is*

enuf (1975), *A Photograph: Lovers-in-Motion* (1977), *Spell #7* or *spell #7* (1979) and *Whitewash* (1994). She wrote many collection of poems like *Melissa & Smith* (1976), *Natural Disasters and Other Festive Occasions* (1977), *Nappy Edges* (1978) and *The Sweet Breath of Life: A Poetic Narrative of the African-American Family*. Some of her novels like *Sassafrass, Cypress & Indigo* (1982), *Betsey Brown* (1985) and *Liliane* (1994). She was a member of various organizations like Actors Equity, National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, PEN American Center, New York Feminist Arts Guild and Writers' Guild. In 1978, Shange became an associate of the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press (WIFP). It is an American non-profit publishing organization which works to increase the communication between the women and connect the public with forms of women-based media. She also participated in The Black Arts Movement which focused on a separate symbolism, mythology, critique and iconology as well as the African American's desire for self-determination and nationhood. Although Shange is described as a "post-Black artist," her work was decidedly feminist whereas this movement has been criticized as misogynistic and sexism had been widely and hotly debated within movement publications and organizations.

Shange was most famous for her choreopoem *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* (1975), it is a mixture of poetry, music, dance and drama. The term choreopoem was coined by Shange to describe her groundbreaking dramatic form, blend of poetry, dance, song and music. Shange's next productions, *Boogie Woogie Landscapes* (1977), *Spell No. 7* (1979), which also received an Obie Award, *Black and White Two Dimensional Planes* (1979) impressed critics with their poetic quality. Don Nelson, writing in the *New York Daily News*, stated, "the word that best describes Shange's works, which are not plays in the

traditional sense, is power” (9). Shange’s poetry, like her drama, is distinctively original. Her poetry collections include *Wild Beauty: New and Selected Poems* (2017), *Three Pieces* (1992), *Some Men* (1981), and others. *Washington Post Book World* critic Harriet Gilbert praised Shange’s third book of poetry, *Nappy Edges* (1978), saying that Shange’s poems arise “from such an intense honesty, from so fresh an awareness of the beauty of sound and of vision, from such mastery of words, from such compassion, humor and intelligence” (13).

Shange is known for her style of writing. In her poetry, she took liberties with the conventions of written English, using nonstandard spellings and punctuation. In Claudia Tate’s *Black Women Writers at Work* explaining her lower-case letters, slashes, and spelling, Shange said that “poems where all the first letters are capitalized” bore her; “also, I like the idea that letters dance. I need some visual stimulation, so that reading becomes not just a passive act and more than an intellectual activity, but demands rigorous participation” (11). Her idiosyncratic punctuation assures her “that the reader is not in control of the process.” She wants her words in print to engage the reader in a kind of struggle, and not be “whatever you can just ignore.” The spellings, she said, “reflect language as I hear it. . . The structure is connected to the music I hear beneath the words” (14).

Shange introduced various themes and concerns that continue to characterize her writings and performances. Her works are often angry tirades against social forces that contribute to the oppression of black women in the United States combined with a celebration of women’s self-fulfillment and spiritual survival. The themes of blackness, gender or sexuality, woman’s work, spirituality and arts are seen in the story of three Black sisters in her first published novel, *Sassafrass, Cypress & Indigo* (1982). The novel which took eight years to complete. Shange’s narrative technique is

peppered with interludes that come various forms like dream stories, letters, recipes and journals which provide a more intimate approach toward self-realization and fulfilment. The book deals with several major themes, including Gullah Geechee culture, women in the arts and the Black Arts Movement too. Shange's coming of age, feminism and racial freedom novel, *Betsey Brown* (1959) is the story of an adolescent African-American girl who is part of the first generation of students to be integrated in the public school system. The coming of age is a young person's transition from being a child to being an adult. The character Betsey goes through transition of change in the end of the novel. The structure of this novel allows Shange to address the feminist issues and racial issues. In order to write the novel, Shange drew on her own experiences growing up in St. Louis, but it was not entirely autobiographical. Another coming of age novel written by Shange, *Liliane: Resurrection of The Daughter* (1994). The novel forms a unique episodic structure which is divided in to chapters narrated by important persons in Liliane's life. The novel weaves with the theme of psychoanalysis by the character of Liliane's psychoanalyst.

Nappy Edges is a collection of poetry and prose poetry which was met with positive reviews and praise from critics like Holly Prado of the *Los Angeles Times* who said of it that "this collection of poems, prose poems and poetic essays merges personal passion and heightened language" (2). The collection is divided into five sections of poetry and prose. Each section of the volume is distinct, the poems are all in conversation with each other and cover similar themes. The poems which in tone and style explore the themes of love, racism, sexism and loneliness. Many of Shange's poems are about poetry itself—what it means to write it and what it means to read it. *The Sweet Breath of Life: A Poetic Narrative of the African-American*

Family is a 2004 photographic poetic narrative by Ntozake Shange. The book depicts the scenes and photographs of everyday urban African-American life through poetic narrative. With photographs the book revolves around the themes such as religion, identity, and representation. Shange has also written many essays, memoirs and children books. One such is *If I can cook / you know god can* (1998) is a culinary memoir and cookbook with short essays that precede recipes written in personal vernacular, and these recipes cover locations such as Cuba, Nicaragua, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and the United States.

Shange entered into women's theatre when she was in California. She casted as priestess in Halifu Osumare's, *The Evolution of Black Dance*, a dance-drama performed in Oakland and Berkeley public schools in 1973 and 1974. Richards remarked that Shange "became imbued with Osumare's confidence in the legitimacy of their own women-centered/African-centered vision." When she left the theatre company, Shange began to perform on poems, dance, and music that would form the basis of Shange's most famous poem, *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* (1976). While in New York until 1982, Shange produced several plays, including *Spell # 7: A Geechee Quick Magic Trance Manual*, which received some positive reviews. In this production, Shange returns to the choreopoem structure, building the play on a series of poetry and dance vignettes that contemplate what it is like to be black in the United States. The main highlight of the play is a black minstrel mask that dominates the setting. During the course of climax, the characters begin to rip off their masks and start their toward a land behind the masks.

for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf is the first theatre work by Ntozake Shange. It consists of a series of dramatic monologues

delivered by seven women which is accompanied by dance and music. Hence Shange coined the term called “choreopoem”. As a choreopoem it contains series of twenty separate poems or monologues with various themes. These monologues were the outcry of seven women who are the characters of the poem. The cast of seven nameless African-American women only identified by the colour they are assigned. They are the lady in red, lady in orange, lady in yellow, lady in green, lady in blue, lady in brown, and lady in purple. Shange originally wrote the monologues as separate poems in 1974. The monologues are interweaved with stories of love, empowerment, struggle, abandonment, abortion, domestic violence, rape and loss. Shange uses vernacular language and unorthodox punctuation to emphasize syncopation. Her writing style is idiosyncratic.

for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf is a piece of work inspired by events of Shange’s own life. She reflected her own life experiences in her choreopoem. Shange also admitted publicly that she had attempted suicide on four occasions. The title of the book was chosen while she was driving in California. In a phone interview conducted with CNN, she explained how she came to the title of her choreopoem: “I was driving the No. 1 Highway in Northern California and I was overcome by the appearance of two parallel rainbows. I had a feeling of near death or near catastrophe. Then I drove through the rainbow and I went away. Then I put that together to form the title.” The colors of the rainbow became the essence and character of the women in the choreopoem. Shange also explains that she chose to use the word “colored” in the title of her choreopoem so that her grandmother would be able to understand it. The word “colored” referred to the African women and their identity. Shange’s poetry expresses many struggles and obstacles that African-American women may face throughout their lives and is a

representation of sisterhood and coming of age as an African-American woman. By the end of the play these women come together in a circle, symbolizing the unity they have found sharing their stories.

The prologue of the choreopoem “dark phrases” begins with the lady brown and her screams and promises. The lady in brown describes the dark aspects of womanhood and proclaims that this piece is all for “colored girls who have considered suicide / but moved to the ends of their own rainbows” (15). In “graduation nite”, the lady in Yellow with ladies in Blue, Green and Red talks about their sexual preferences, especially the graduation night spent by Lady Yellow with her male friends. Following that in “now i love somebody more than” – the Lady in Blue talks about her dance marathons and her love for music. This also represents African women’s love for music and dance. In no assistance” – the Lady in Red has loved a person which she mentions as “You” throughout the poem. The Lady in Orange in, “i’m a poet who” conveys her love for dance and writing poems in English to share her thoughts to the world. The theme of rape is portrayed by Ladies in Red, Blue, Purple in “latent rapists”. The three women state the picture of their male friends who have nice smiles and buy them dinner but end up molesting them. The sad truth is portrayed by them and this phase ends with the women’s reaction to an imaginary slap on the stage. The scene of a lonely aborted women in the hospital bed is reflected by the Lady in Blue in “abortion cycle #1”. In “sechita” – Lady in Purple with Lady in Green describes Sechita, the Egyptian goddess of creativity, love and beauty.

The Lady in Red shows herself to be a deliberate woman in the monologue, “one”. The Lady in Blue begins her monologue “i usedta to live in the world” by explaining her life in Harlem where she cannot bring herself to be nice. The

“pyramid” tells the story three ladies in Blue, Yellow and Orange who were all attracted to the same man. The theme of sisterhood plays an important role here. In “no more love poems #2”, the Lady in Purple deliberately refuses to dance with English speaking men. She uses dance as an escape from reality. Following that the Lady in Blue in her monologue, “no more love poems #3”, proclaims it might be easier to white than colored. In “no more love poems #4”, the Lady in Yellow shares that she has lost connection with the reality. Even her dance was not able to help her emotional pain. All the four “no more love poems” reflects their pain of being colored and loss of touch with reality. The pain and reflection of this is seen in the monologue, “sorry”. The Lady in Blue rejects all the apologies from the men. She feels it does not soothe her soul anymore. She just wants to scream her troubles and break the things. In “positive” the Lady in Yellow shares her relationship with an AIDS positive man. The Lady in Yellow tested positive and confronts it with her lover but he accuses her for cheating on him. She tells him to get tested but he leaves her. The last poem “a laying on of hands” ends with ladies believing themselves with the presence of some strong hand. It refers to the hands of God who help them to love themselves and choose to be happy amidst bullying of white people. Finally, all the ladies repeat the lines she says, “i found god in myself / & i loved her / I loved her fiercely”. The overall arc of the piece moves from despair and longing to a sense of community and hopefulness that comes from embracing female society and developing a strong sense of self. Shange weaves pieces of music throughout the performance.

Shange’s for Colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf won many literary awards and theatre awards. It was first performed in a women’s bar outside Berkeley, California. In July 1975, she reworked the same work

and professionally presented in New York city at Studio Rivbea. The show performed in New Federal Theatre gained her popularity especially among African-American and Latino audiences. As a result, *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* performed at The Public Theatre in June 1976. The play was staged at the Boothway Theatre on Broadway and ran for nearly 742 shows. The staged choreopoem was also published in the book form in 1977 by Macmillan Publishing, followed by a Literary Guild edition in October 1977 and Bantam Books editions beginning in 1980. In 1982 the play was adapted for a television PBS station WNET-TV, as part of the *American Playhouse*. A review by *The New York Times* states: “What Miss Shange prefers to call a *choreopoem* has been expanded into realistic settings that too often resemble the sanitized atmosphere of an episode of *Good Times*. The net result has been a considerable reduction in the work’s emotional impact” (3). The TV adaptation is also considered as a diluted version of the authentic choreopoem. Shange’s work has been transformed using different forms of media. In 1995, Shange directed a 20th anniversary production of *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf* at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center in New York. In 2010, Tyler Perry adapted the choreopoem into a film. It has been continually performed in colleges and universities, art spaces, and theatres throughout the world. It has been set in beauty shops, prisons, and other historical time periods. A Brazilian production dropped the word “color” in the title and a group of women in Kentucky made it about class instead of race. The anthology of essays was edited by Keith Boykin with the same title of Shange, *For Colored Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Still Not Enough: Coming of Age, Coming Out, and Coming Home* (2012).

Shange's choreopoem can be considered as semi-autobiographical because other experience as an African-American woman was interweaved in the monologues and as well as the title itself. She attempted suicide nearly for four times and during the last time when she was driving she chose the side of rainbow which symbolise restarting her life instead of ending it. The sufferings and emotions of African-American women is depicted in the poem. The ending part of the poem with all the ladies together makes an important part in the whole work. The colored ladies together found a strong impression of God or some helping hand. It refers to the new hope in their life which bloomed by their self-love after many hurdles. Thus the Lady in Brown ends the poem by saying "this is for colored girls who have considered suicide/ but are movin to the ends of their own rainbows." The upcoming chapters are the analysis of the Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf* based on the crisis and conflicts faced by Black women in stage of acquiring self- actualization. The paper will also incorporate the trauma of silence encountered by the African American women. It will also explore the technique and narrative style of Shange as techniques of experience. By analysing the pieces separately, the paper will attempt to find out the references to struggles of self-actualization. In the summation, the analysis will establish that this poem is an asset to women's studies and as well as a guide in life for all coloured girls.

CHAPTER TWO

Ntozake Shange, poet and playwright performed in stages with other colored women to show the reflection of African women. She is not only a poet but turned to be director of her staged play too. Her confidence without director, writing poems in tea break of the shoot, college, vacation made a significant part in the play. Each woman is chosen from the real life of Shange. She says it is not a solo voice of hers alone but the voices of all women around her. Shange's depiction of women can be known from the preface of her work *for colored girls who have considered when the rain is enuf*. All her seven women in plain colored dress represent each lady with each persona and that each persona with a unique deific principle marking the journey of womanhood. Here the personal story of a woman became the story of everyone and the solo voices becoming many. In Preface of her work, *for colored girls who have considered when the rain is enuf*, "Each poem fell into its rightful place, a rainbow of colors, shapes, and timbres of voice, my solo instrument blossoming into a cosmic chamber ensemble" (10).

Shange used varied colors in all her works from her novel *Betsey Brown* to *Liliane*. The poem deals with all kinds of themes from love, sex, rape, abortion and journey poems. The journey poems are "now i love somebody more then" and "toussaint". In each poem a young girl runs away from the world to discover herself. One travels down the roads of Mississippi and the other in the project party. The

poem brings light on the girls to the other kind of people of color or other worlds. She faces adventure, kindness and cruelty. Shange says that cruelty is not faced alone but shared with each other and gain strength to go in life. In the preface of Shange's work *for colored girls who have considered when the rain is enuf* she says, "The poems are the play's first hint of the global misogyny that we women face" (3).

Shange writes about sexual oppression in a hegemonic discourse where women are always victimized and marginalized by the powerful patriarchal system from which women cannot escape. Many feminists see that the female body is being colonized by the male dominance, referring to the phallogocentrism. Male dominance has taken place, for the man's possession of a "phallus" with which he dominates the female body, thus repressing the female to take the back-seat status. In her essay, Gilbert discusses the literary paternity where man /male uses his "pen-is" to write about his hegemonic discourse. He suppresses and represses the female/feminine body and determines that what should prevail is male-related. Gilbert, metaphorically, asserts that the male author "fathers" his texts, so the feminine is ruled and systematized through the legitimization of the paternal structure. Thus, the male text is "sword like" because it deals with the female discourse harshly in a way that confines them to what is legitimate from a paternal point of view, in this hegemonic discourse where the paternal cannot tolerate the feminine. By emphasizing the heterogeneity of women's emotional and physical needs and experience, the women writers make a profoundly political statement. However, this does not come about because the aim of her work is primarily political. Indeed, Shange explains that this kind of 'point' can stifle creativity as she explained in an interview in *Black Women Writers*:

The commercial people tell me that one of the reasons the rest of my work hasn't been as commercially successful as for colored girls is that it has no point that they could sell. That's because there's going to be no more point. I am not writing about a point. for colored girls doesn't have a point either, but they made a point out of it. Those girls were people whom I cared about, people whom I offered to you for you to see and to know. Black and Latin writers have to start demanding that the fact that we're alive is point enough! (162)

Shange writes as a woman for women trying to find a woman's voice, and writes the body. Her use of language de-struct(ure)s literary and theatrical conventions as a means of foregrounding the body", emotions and the workings of the unconscious. These may function as if the body and the speech are interconnected: Shange's system of spelling is dictated by the body.

There are elements of deviation from the written norm, however, which cannot simply be ascribed to the body. The most obvious of such deviations is the constant use of small letters. In *Black Women Writers at Work*, Shange attributes this to the influence of writers like LeRoi Jones and Ishmael Reed: "It bothers me, on occasion, to look at poems where all the first letters are capitalized. It's very boring to me. That's why I use the lower-case alphabet" (163). One might argue that the exclusive use of that lower case alphabet is equally monotonous, but if one looks for other explanations, the lower case might reflect an inferior sense of status that is hierarchy or power structures on the part of young black women who are at the center of the play representing mostly "every woman" character of for colored girls. Another woman representation shows at the end when the young black woman self-affirmingly says: "I found god in myself/ & I loved her/ I lived her fiercely" (63).

The word “colored” makes a distinction between White and Black. It is considered as the tribute to the African women. Every African woman of her community praised for her words of hope in them. She said to me simply, “Thank you for helping me to love my daughters fiercely and raise them right” (14). Their sufferings, emotions, love and other women psychic problems were depicted in the poem. This the reason Shange calls this piece to be a voice of many. There are both hope and alienation in the word colored.

The poem is constructed by the experiences of her known people. *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf* is considered as the life saviour of girl and women who are losing themselves. The word “suicide” does not refers to the mortal death but the death of the soul. The death of the girl’s dream, life and her own self and soul.

The life of African women can be known from histories. The reflection of history and tragedies can be seen in the works of many writers. Many renowned writers like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, J.M. Coetzee reflected the sufferings of women through rape and harassment. In J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*, Lucy a black white woman raped by black men is comparable with Shange’s “latent rapists” where African women are raped by their own black friends and strangers. Lucy says, “It was done with personal hatred. That was what stunned me more than anything” (156). Many of the African women writers concentrated on depicting their sufferings in their work. The life tragedy of African women is depicted by Shange and gives them hope at the end of the journey. Shange wants the girls to take their losing self and live again with hope. The term considered suicide recalls Shange life when she literally considered suicide and tried to end her life.

The poems for colored girls are written despite their class, social background, race and upbringing. Therefore, Shange has divided the poems and allotted each color for each woman regarding her persona. Each woman in the poem conveys their struggle in life. There are some humorous poems too. Some poems even represent dramatic truth about life on the society. Between these first and last poems, the middle poems recreate and universalize a Black woman's experiences both spiritually and physically. These poems are about individuals, but represent the common experience of a Black woman whether it is pain or joy.

The first poem introduces women from various places. It gives a proper introduction to the ladies in the play. The poem shows how alienated they are and how they accept their society. The middle poems deal with control and loss of control in woman's life. Firstly, it depicts the challenges faced by woman's body and sexuality. This includes rape or coming to terms with one's self as sexual during adolescence. Secondly, it also portrays how women develop themselves and nurture their inner self to live with hope and courage.

"for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf" establishes an identity for Shange as a writer through her radical language, and expresses in depth the need of self-affirmation for black women. In poem, Shange refers to physical harm and domestic violence done to the African women. Shange also talks about abortion, to show how women, especially black women were oppressed. They were not only tortured physically but also psychologically. To escape from society's wicked and shaming eye, they aborted their babies. The lady in blue tells in the poem abortion cycle #1, "i cdnt have people/ lookin at me/ pregnant" (36). The Character cries helplessly,

tubes tables white washed windows

grime from age wiped over once
legs spread
anxious
eyes crawling upon me
eyes rollin in my thighs
metal horses gnawin my womb
dead mice fall from my mouth
i really didnt mean to
i really didnt think I cd. (36)

The pain of abortion and hiding from the eyes of society is depicted by Shange in *abortion cycle#1*. Shange touches upon the burden of woman who has to bear during an unwanted pregnancy. Without the support of the child's father and friends, the invasion of a pregnancy is overwhelming. Shange writes a poem that describes the invasiveness of the abortion procedure on a woman's body.

The poem *graduation nite and no assistance* represents an important lesson in every girl's life. Women were considered to be emotionally strong and have strong control in their life. But sometimes the control is taken away. In the poem *latent rapists*, she deals with the true nature of rape. The lady in red explains the truth of rape often happens in the presence of friends. The ladies feel that the nature of the rape has changed because it is not the stranger who rapes them. The saddest reality is that they are invited by their friends to dinner and raped by their own friends. As the poem explains, "cuz it turns out the nature of rape has changed/ we can now meet them in circles we frequent for companionship" (34). Shange boldly talks about a woman's inability to press charges: "pressin charges will be as hard/ as keeping yr legs closed/ while five fools try to run a &in on you" (32). The ladies share their

brutal rape experience by their known men. “while they invite a couple friends over to have you/ are suffering from latent rapist bravado/ & we are left with scars” (33).

“Sechita”, deals with the goddess of filth and creativity. Sechita is a dancer who dances to amuse white people in a dirt filled carnival. Shange contrasts the beauty of Sechita’s dances with the squalor surrounding the show. She describes this as, god seemed to be wiping his feet in her face. Despite the degrading experience of men hollering and, “gold pieces hittin the makeshift stagel her thighs/ they were airnin coins tween her thighs,”(38). Sechita danced on as though a goddess. The poem may look plainly a description of beauty but it about losing one’s self in dance. Sechita uses her dance to let our anger and become one with dance. She dances gracefully like a goddess and calls herself as an egyptian goddess. Dance is not only a movement of action to her but it is an escape from reality. She danced to forget her sorrows of guilt and shame caused by other people mainly white. Shange presented Sechita as a mythical character in both style and characterization. Sechita is the reflection of the colored woman itself. She dances to entertain white people in filthy places. Shange ended the poem powerfully as Sechita, “kicked viciously thru the nitel catchin stars tween her toes”(37). The poem “toussaint” tells about the experience of Shange and her curiosity in meeting him. The poem concerns the young girl meeting the boy on her way to Haiti.

became my secret lover at the age of 8
I entertained him in my bedroom
widda flashlight under my covers
way into the night/ we discussed strategies
how to remove white girls from my hopscotch games
& etc. (78)

The poem “one” and “I usedta live in the world” reflects the deliberate women who works in day and latter one wants to start a life in Harlem as a stranger. The woman at midnight dresses in aqua sequins and sleeps with a man. She was hot and a deliberate coquette who work in day and spends her night with some other white or colored men. After that, “she became/ordinary/brown braided woman/with big legs & full lips” (48). In “I usedta live in the world” the lady in blue wants to remain as a stranger to avoid all the cruelties done by men. She wants to hide herself from known people. This becomes evident from the line,

then i moved to harlem
for the set-up
a universe
six blocks of cruelty
piled up on itself
a tunnel
closing. (53)

The emotional agony faced by women like rape, abortion and losing oneself is expressed in Shange’s writing. Above all, Shange makes a clear distinction between the control a woman has of herself and the rules to take that control away. These poems shows the experiences of women as marginalized members of society. Shange boldly introduces many issues that had been considered unworthy of discussion because they dealt with women’s feelings and emotions. Descriptions and sufferings of women issues continues throughout the play.

The woman’s supporting tendency and nurturing others as well as themselves are expressed in the poem “pyramid”. The pyramid is made up of group of building objects likewise the friendship of women is built by the permanent bonding which can

be called as sisterhood too. The mutual support can be given by like-minded people beyond genders. But only a woman can give a pure mutual support by making the opposite feel pampered and soul free. The poem “pyramid” tells about three black women who fall in love with same man. Even when the man chooses one woman among them, the remaining felt happy. Just after knowing the truth that their friend is ditched by him, all the three sit together and comfort her. This shows how the black women supports other women in the tragic situation of the other woman without hatred and jealousy. “He found one” (54), indicates that the man did not choose the individual, but rather any woman. There is an understanding of mutual suffering among the friends, and these friends are the constant throughout these women’s lives. This indicates that they are not just friends, but rather sisters or family and more significant to each other than the men that come and go. Clearly the man’s devotion to these women is rather loose as he tries to spark romance between the other two friends.

she held her head on her lap
the lap of her sisters soakin up tears
each understandin how much love stood between them
how much love between them
love between them. (55)

The other poem “a nite with beau willie brown” is seen as an example of nurturing or nurturing society. The depiction of Black woman’s life as a mother and her trails in bringing up her children is found in Shange’s poem. It is not about a mother losing her children but about the relationship between Crystal and Beau Willie Brown. Crystal is a black woman who loves Beau Willie Brown. The poem starts with the abuse of Willlie Brown entering into the apartment and demands to see his

children. Crystal lets him see the children, but he holds them out the window, demanding that she marry him or threatening to drop the children. It doesn't depict how much they loved each other but the struggle faced by their children. Beau Willie Brown has served his time in Vietnam and has been dumped back into his life without any help. Beau Willie is just as much as a victim as Crystal. Of course, the ultimate victims in the poem are the children, caught between two very vulnerable people. Both Crystal and Beau Willie have lost power. The spontaneous act of dropping the children shows how Beau Willie is not in control of his life or emotions. Crystal cannot properly nurture her children if she has not nurtured herself. Perhaps she has never had an example of what healthy relationships looked like. In Lester's, *Ntozake Shange: A Critical Study of the Plays* Shange says,

And she is just as pitied and just as in need of love and respect as Beau was since the day he was born. It's unfortunate and it's another indication to me that we always shift our attention to the male character no matter what happens.. . [This] indicates to me that we're in an a* lot of trouble emotionally as people and that as long as we don't care about Crystal and other women like her and like me who have known moments of great powerlessness - and for that reason just to go across the street becomes a great attack on the world - we have an ad lot of work to do (64).

Shange's work portrays all the violent brutalities that black women undergone in her poems. This enraged many African and American men in her times. She gives a clear cut explanation that this work is only for colored girl. So anything placing male outside the work turns to be an attack on them. Shange lived in the women- centered and taught women studies and manners. So she wants to voice out for women and

empower them together. It is not her motive to write bad about men. All she says in her Preface *for colored colored girls who have considered suicide/ when rainbow is enuf* as, “It was as if merely placing the story outside themselves was an attack. *for colored girls* was and is for colored girls” (11). But still people think it is an attack on men.

Shange’s general presentation of males throughout the play leaves audience members seeing *for colored girls* as another black feminist attack on all men, mainly black. The men, most of the women in the choreopoem become involved with, are shallow, inconsiderate, and either incapable of communicating or unwilling to communicate except through sex, violence, or verbal abuse. And finally, the accusation of blatant male-bashing might stem from Shange’s efforts to drive home in the “latent rapist” section the complex reality of any woman’s existence: that every man is a potential rapist, that “women relinquish all personal rights / in the presence of a man / who apparently cd be considered a rapist” (20)

Shange has not portrayed men in the negative light in her poems. In- fact in poems like “toussaint” and “now I love somebody more than” presents a healthy picture of men. There are some male imposed struggles faced by black women in poems like “latent rapists” and “I usedta live in the world”. The black women feel insecure to go outside at night is reflected in the line, “round midnite/ praying wont no young man/ think i’m pretty in a dark mornin” (51). And being betrayed by known male friends is also portrayed in the poem as, “we cud even have em over for dinner/ & get raped in our own houses/ by invitation/ a friend” (35). True “beau willie” is devastating but despite of his horrific and wild actions, Beau Willie Brown is an empathetic character.

for colored colored girls who have considered suicide/ when rainbow is enuf

is not only about women and pain faced by women, but rather face it and relate it to their own lives. Crystal or any other character cannot be ignored. “a nite with beau willie brown” is the climax of the play. This poem contains the most anger and tragedy in the piece. Crystal has lost her pride, her strength, her relationship, and her children. This character has hit the bottom with no place left to go, leaving the audience hopeless, but in the end Shange replenishes hope. Shange gives finally a laying hand which is not the hand of others. She wants each woman to pull themselves up and choose the path of rainbow. The final poem, “a laying on of hands” is unlike the first because it calls the women to act or be reborn. The power to continue and find one’s self must come from inside a Black woman, and not from society. Society does not offer a woman control, but rather a feeling of powerlessness. One of the last phrases written in the play is an affirmation for Black women and it gives them power, “I found god in mysew & I loved her/ I loved her fiercely.” The very last line of the play restates Sbange intentions, “& this is for colored girls who have considered suicidel but are movin to the ends of their own rainbows” (64). The poem sends the message to love and heal yourself because nobody else can do it for you.

CHAPTER THREE

TECHNIQUE, STYLE AND NARRATOLOGY

Semiotics is the study of sign and symbols. It is also called as science of signs. According to Ferdinand de Saussure, sign is a combination of signifier and signified. It acts as a part of meaningful communication. A signifier can be one but the signified can be many. Jacques Derrida also talks about multiple meanings of a sign until and unless it is conventionally fixed. A sign makes meaning only in relation to other signs and depending upon the context we decode the signs. Sometimes signs are culturally influenced. According to Charles Sanders Peirce semiotic significance is triadic and defined as something which stands for somebody for something. The three parts of a sign are icon, index and symbol. An icon resembles its referent; an index is associated with the referent; and a symbol is related to the referent only by convention. Peirce also demonstrated that a sign can never have a definite meaning, for the meaning must be conventionally qualified.

Semiotics became a major approach to cultural studies in the late 1960s with the English translation of Roland Barthes collection of essays entitled *Mythologies*. In 1964, Barthes declared that “semiology aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex

associations of all of these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not languages, at least systems of signification". (9)

Ntozake Shange is a black feminist poet, playwright and novelist. She addresses the issues of race, gender and feminism in her works. Shange introduced a new technique called choreopoem. *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when rainbow is enuf* is a combination of dance, music, song and poetry. Shange discovered her strength as a black woman in dance forms, poetry and music. Her genre is a collection of rich genres mixed together which are presented in contradiction and contrast. Her principal works can be divided into five genres. They are children's literature, drama, long fiction, nonfiction and poetry. Her choreopoems, long fiction and poetry brought her to the limelight.

Shange prefers a new genre of writing, the choreopoem for the purpose of delineating the plight of the black women in America. Neal A. Lester in his introduction to *Ntozake Shange: A Critical Study of the Plays* defines, "Shange's "choreopoem" is the most significant contribution to the stage. Defined simply the choreopoem is a theatrical expression ... that, according to Shange, outline a distinctly African American heritage-to arouse an emotional response in an audience."

(3) Shange's objective of choosing a genre which is more original and traditionally specific is to project her independence from the standard theatrical forms. She wrote for Black audience, especially for the young black women who did not have any model to turn to at times of disaster. So she chose a genre which made her feel close to her home country. Her own name change from Poullete Williams to Ntozake Shange shows her unwillingness to attach her identity to name which is not only attributed to a male and also more Americanized. Her choice of baptizing to an African name affirms her affinity to attach herself to her traditional root.

The title of the choreopoem *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* is full of signs of dissension. Shange uses the small case letters for the title and she uses phonetic spelling to revolt against a society which refuses to accept her as she is. Shange has also used an outdated term colored which black people abandoned as oppressive in the sixties. According to Shange, the word colored renders a cultural identification with black people. Being unequal to whites, they were unworthy of sharing the same territorial space with the whites. But Shange's seven women reclaim their own space in their move toward realized selfhood. Shange speaks of the importance of self -definition, and takes pride in dark skin and African heritage and affirms her African ancestry by using the word "colored". According to her it is not a derogatory term, but a term of endearment among the black family. Shange recollects her own grandmother calling her a colored girl. Shange employs the word "rainbow" in the title to represent the African American possibility to start all over again.

Poetic language is used with the purpose of creating deeper, more complex and more meaningful poems and texts. It is supposed to evoke certain emotions, feelings, thoughts and sensations, and present various images and ideas to the readers. The careful poetic language is used in the writing which is evident from the title itself. *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* is a deliberate selection of words and language. The words represent the intentions of the author and identity for whom the author is writing. Like all poetry, the meaning of the phrases is up for interpretation. The poem becomes vulnerable each time an audience tries to interpret the author's intentions. While this is true of Shange's work, there are many words used deliberately chosen to convey a specific meaning.

The first half of the title, “for colored girls,” represents Shange’s intended audience. She writes for black women. Her concentration and choice of words is based on her audience. Also, the author uses the word “colored” because as she put it herself. Lester in his work, *Ntozake Shange: A Critical Study of the Plays* says,

I used the words “colored girls” in the title because my grandmother would understand. It wouldn’t put her off or turn her away. I wanted to get back to the brass tacks of myself as a child; I was a regular colored girl, with a family that was good to me (24).

for colored girls who have considered suicide/ when suicide is enuf is a spectacle examining the particular experiences of the black women in American society through poetic monologues and dialogues. Dramatic monologue means self-conversation, speech or talks which includes interlocutor presented dramatically. It means a person, who is speaking to himself or someone else speaks to reveal specific intentions of his actions. The play deals with the lives and growth of seven different black women, each dressed in the colour of the rainbow and brown. They are named after the colour of their dress. The rainbow colours of the costume identify the characters as the Lady in Blue, Yellow, Brown, Orange, Purple, Red and Green and portray collective women’s experience. These women voice out their protest against their oppression as women and as blacks. The ultimate aim of the piece is to make the African American women to accept herself and her ethnic identity and learn to be independent and find God within herself. Each woman conveys their feelings and emotions through monologue. Shange presented their psychological trauma in a dramatic way. The depiction of Crystal and Beau Willie can be taken as the best example. Their relationship and Crystal’s thought on her life is depicted vividly.

Shange uses the word “Lady” to represent the women who live up to the elegant title and maintain their dignity in the face of the degradation they go through.

Another aspect is naming which belongs to the symbolic order, and optimizes social mobility. Not naming is therefore one way of refusing the symbolic order and thus the categorizations that dominate society. It is important in this context that ‘choreo’ refers not only to dance but also to the group, which in for colored girls is an anonymous group of seven ladies, differentiated by color of dress rather than name. Without a name which gives a specific identity they can move literally, for the individual poems in for colored girls are separated from each other by the re-grouping of the performers- into and out of identities which they inhabit for the space of a particular poem or section. An African woman can move on, change through the body; it is for this reason that for colored girls offers movement, instability, the subject is in process or on trial, or in the making, that is the “the semiotic” as form and content.

As a choreopoem, for colored girls combines music, song, dance and poetry. What these four elements have in common is that their systems of signification foreground the characteristics of Julia Kristeva. In *Revolution of Poetic Language*, Kristeva uses *chora* within the context of psychoanalytic discourse to name “an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral stases” (25). Kristeva’s semiotic disposition, being rhythmic, repetitive, non-linear and complex in their form as well as indeterminate in their meaning, resonating the fluidity of women’s writing of the body. She says in *Revolution of Poetic Language* as,

We differentiate this uncertain and indeterminate *articulation* from a *disposition* that already depends on representation, lends itself to

phenomenological, spatial intuition, and gives rise to a geometry. The *chora*, as rupture and articulations (rhythm), precedes evidence, verisimilitude, spatiality, and temporality. Our discourse—all discourse—moves with and against the *chora* in the sense that it simultaneously depends upon and refuses it. Although the *chora* can be designated and regulated, it can never be definitively posited: as a result, one can situate the *chora* and, if necessary, lend it a topology, but one can never give it axiomatic form (25).

They signal the expression of “discrete quantities of energy” which “move through the body” in an as yet non-signifying manner. According to Kristeva, the body through its drives and movements, and the body creates “the ordering principle of the semiotic chora” (27). The disposition of the semiotic outlook as an utterance expresses the self as body, or body as self. The semiotic characteristic is disruptive of all structures created by self because the self is recreated through the changing reflexes of the semiotic body movements. It refuses their norms and setting up the self as a counter-authority. The choreography is thus self-affirming rather than self-denying. It signals the body that will not be denied.

Dance in all the poems stated as an escape from reality and expression of liberty and emotions. Dancing is a symbol that shapes a tonal form in the choreopoem resembling a catharsis. It is a freeing agent for these colored girls and they use the dance as a defense mechanism. Shange uses the medium of dance and music to express the pain because they are powerful when words fail. It is a positive force spiritually elevating and liberating, for the blacks and Shange. It comforts, consoles, and saves from within. Sechita, the African Goddess who transforms her dance before a lustful crowd to one of power over the white men. She emphasizes that she still

possesses a dignity and beauty of her own which cannot be snatched from her. She disassociates her soul and dances to assert her primal connection which is traced to the past, present and future. Sechita's performance operates within the African conception of theatre being simultaneously representational and presentational. It constructs a real as well as a transcending vision of the divine through the performers and the audience's belief. Here dance is symbolized as an art form of liberation.

The Afrocentric dance sequences and the narrative style locate the piece within the ethos of the African American culture. The African American experience is expressed through the art of storytelling and it is carefully constructed in nonlinear patterns and the feminist content is defined. Shange disregards the conventional, linear dramatic structure. Shange's is a holistic vision, wherein language, music, movement, icon, time and space are manipulated to make poetry into drama and dance, which ultimately empowers one to grapple with a problematic social world.

Shange develops her narration through monologues. The character's monologue plays an important role in the play more than a spoken language. Shange has divided the piece and arranged the performance with actors representing several different characters. Many of these poems are humorous and others represent a dramatic truth about life on the outside of society. *For colored girls who considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf* does not have a clear beginning or end to the performance. Each poem reaches its own climax. The play is cyclical in nature, beginning and ending in a collective voice. In between these two poems, Shange tells stories that build onto each other. Finally, even though the play has no traditional beginning or ending, there is an intended conclusion to be made, that is, to be reborn or find God in yourself and "love her fiercely" (63).

Shange uses both Black English and its pronunciation spelling in her poem like “yr” means yours and “lyf” means life. She employs the slash instead of the period and omits capitalization in addition to phonetic spellings. Her works are rendered in lower case, using irregular spellings and using common and unusual abbreviations and symbols in place of the usual words and ignores standard grammar in her effort to capture the nuances of Black women’s speech patterns and experience. Shange’s style is characterized in the lines spoken by the lady in yellow,

i’ve lost it
touch wit reality/ i don’t know who’s doin it
i thot i waz but i waz so stupid i waz able to be hurt
& that’s not real/ not anymore/ i shd be immune/ if i’m
Still alive & that’s what i waz discussin/ how i am still
\ alive & my dependency on other livin beins for love
i survive on intimacy & tomorrow/ that’s all i’ve got goin
& the music waz like smack & you knew abt that
& still refused my dance waz not enuf/ & it waz all i had
but bein alive & bein a woman & bein colored is a
metaphysical
dilemma/ (45)

The writing structure of Shange can be compared with E.E. Cummings because he has set himself from other writers by using different types of structure to add interest and creativity into his poetry. Like-wise Shange used a creative narration through slashes, periods, spellings and punctuation. Both Cummings and Shange writing style have a common feature. The choppiness in sentence length, its spacing

and punctuation and the poem's length and shape are the four facets of form and structure which are found in their poems. But both used it for a specific cause. Cummings uses choppiness in his line length to create effect of the character's thoughts and feelings. Shange used it to depict the nuances of Black women and their experience through spoken language. The way Cummings chop the sentence adds feeling. The poem *Me up at does* is a perfect example.

Me up at does
outofthedoor
quietly Stare
a poisoned mouse
still who alive
isaskingWhat
have i done that
You wouldn't have

Each line is no more than four words long which gives the poem a choppy effect that portrays the speaker's feelings about what he has just done. Even though no words in the poem outright state his feelings of guilt the message still comes through loud and clear because of the way in which it is written. Also, he doesn't put in any unnecessary words at all; each word he puts in there is essential to the sentence and would be illiterate without it.

On other hand, Shange use of diction is notable. She chooses the apt words and places in right place. She avoids unnecessary words to the character's monologue. Every poem has it unique choice of words which delivers and conveys its meaning to the readers. The mood and thought of the character can be felt through her apt choice

of words. This feature made her poems free from monotonous. In her poem abortion cycle#1, the feeling of the aborted women could be felt through words.

Shange opens a new dimension in the literary theatre through her bold use of language and by dealing with people formerly given little value by other writers. Philip U. Effiong states in the article *Ntozake Shange's Choreopoem: Reinventing a Heritage of poetry and Dance*, that "By creating and working with abstract or symbolic settings, Shange distanced herself from domestic locations, like the kitchen and dining room, in which stereotypical female roles are normally played out. Where she presented specific settings, continuous shifts in theme and time rendered them timeless and "universal." (4)

Thus the semiotics is essential as it helps to understand that reality does not have a purely objective existence independent of human interpretation. It instructs that reality is a system of signs. Studying semiotics makes one aware of reality as a construction which facilitates others in constructing it. It helps one realize that meaning is neither existing in the world or in a text, nor is meaning is transmitted to us. It is actively created according to a complex interplay of codes or conventions of which one is normally unaware of.

Shange's poem is a representation of the African American theatre which places emphasis on action, collective participation and celebration. She rebels against the patriarchal Standard English by avoiding capitalization and deviating from conventional spellings and pronunciation. This by itself is a sign of her rebellion against a society which thrusts them to the margins. She establishes the Black Aesthetic by bringing in signs and symbols from the Black tradition to portray the predicament of the double jeopardized black woman. The color of the cloths, the

rainbow after the storm, the passion flower, the sisterhood, the laying of hands, the Vietnam veteran are some of the signs which have been interpreted semiotically.

CHAPTER FOUR

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

The early 20th century marking the beginning of modern psychology and with the pace of this psychology the psychological analysis of literary texts evolved. This method of critiquing used the concepts advocated by noted sociologists, including Carl Jung, Alfred Adler and Otto Rank and above all Sigmund Freud. It was first used or developed as a method of therapy for neuroses by Freud, but very soon expanded it to account for many expanded developments and practices in the history of civilizations including warfare, mythology, religion, literature and other arts.

Psychoanalytic therapy is the re-narration of a person's life. It has given much importance on the significance between the unconscious and thought processes. They believed that an awareness of this is therapeutic and vital to a healthy mind. Psychoanalysis emphasized on motives, it focused on hidden or disguised motives which helps to clarify literature on two levels, the level of writing itself and the level of character action within the text. Psychoanalysis gives emphasis on the subject and tries to explain what are the relationship of meaning and identity are to the psychic and cultural forces. Psychoanalysis examines the articulation of our most private

anxieties and meanings to culture and gives us a perspective on them as cultural formations.

Black women occupy a unique social position as members of two socially marginalized groups being both Black and female in a country that privileges Whiteness and maleness. Racial identity plays an important role in African American society. Many issues due to racial and gender crisis are still prevailing in their society. The writers in literature reflect these themes in their writing. In plain reading it may seem as general but in depth analysis it is writer's own pain and anguish that reflected in his or her works. Ntozake Shange's *for coloured girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf* became a cornerstone of black feminist writing and 20th century drama.

It is the reflection of Shange's life and emotions. The writers's pain and anguish is seen throughout the work. Shange grew up affected by racism and sexism. Her childhood was complicated by much of the civil rights movement and she was forced to attend an integrated school after the Brown versus the Board of Education Decision. In the segregated school, she was allowed to learn with the support of the other Black children, but the integrated school provided only alienation. These experiences and the expectations of a hostile society grew until Shange could not tolerate them anymore. Her marriage is also not a happy one.

Shange's life struggles would provide much inspiration for her work. There is no doubt the content of *for coloured girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf* came from the writer's experiences. Shange explained that no writer can separate himself or herself emotionally from the work. In Claudia Tate's *Black Women Writers at War* Shange clarified that she is, "committed to the idea that one of the few things human beings have to offer is the richness of unconscious and

conscious emotional responses to being alive” (151). Therefore, many of the characters are mixtures of Shange’s emotions and people she has met throughout her life. Critics state that many of her characters are not real. Shange takes this as a personal attack because all the characters come from her. It would imply that her experiences and emotions were inauthentic. (158)

Racial identity and gender identity made Black women feel inferior and alienated. While there are no white characters in *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf*, Ntozake Shange makes it clear that race forms an important part of her characters’ identities. The title of *for colored girls...* indicates that Shange’s impetus for writing the choreopoem in the first place was to encourage women of colour to embrace their identities. All of the main characters in Shange’s choreopoem are women of colour, and their racial identity and gender affects the perspective through which the audience experiences of all the various anecdotes. Through the ladies’ stories of struggle and maturation, Shange is able to address the issue of race in America.

Alienation is the important problem faced by Black women. They consciously and unconsciously alienate themselves due to physical and psychological traumas and abuses from Whites as well as their own Black community. The difference in colour made them constantly submissive and meek. They were easily become victims of lot of sexual abuses, insults, harassments and rape. The assailant takes them for granted and throw them aside with humiliation. These bitter and unspoken side and situations of Black women remain in their mind and reflect in their actions and struggles. They are constantly struggling to voice out and finally gets tired because of the social unawareness. At this stage woman become powerless and hide their emotions and pains. These anguish unconsciously makes them alienated and feel indifferent and

detached from society. In “i usedta live in the world,” Shange depicts the modern dreariness, barrenness, and cruelty of Harlem. She based this poem on her own very lonely time in the city. The lady in blue draws contrasts between life inside and outside Harlem. In the wide world, she feels powerful, connected to nature, and full of life. In Harlem, she feels isolated, “remaining a stranger” (50) even though her universe is six blocks. Shange creates a mood of claustrophobia as she repeats the phrase six blocks. In Harlem, the world keeps getting smaller: It is “six blocks of cruelty / piled up on itself / a tunnel / closin” (53). The hopelessness of her environment takes its toll on her psyche, making her mean, spiteful, and incapable of pleasantries. Although in many of the poems in the play the women come together and support each other, this one evokes a profound sense of alienation. This sense of alienation makes them silent and unspoken.

Silence is always associated with women as her personality or stereotypical trait, but it is the result of social and patriarchal domination. These oppressions wound them with the scars of trauma. The trauma and pain experienced by Black women is psychologically more severe than the other women. Many women have suffered collective traumatic events, and without getting into a contentious discourse on whose scars are longer and deeper, it is clear one wound that has yet to heal is that of Black women. Black women continue to suffer from trauma they endured as a result of the dynamics of the societal structure of their world. Moreover, that social structure, by its very nature, imposed a code of silence upon Black women, which continues to exist to this day. There are some aspects of life one does not share and there are aspects that silence protects. As a result of this culture of secrecy, Black women, through their silence, have unwittingly enabled and protected those who have abused them for decades.

Black women's silence has largely resulted in the protection of two main groups: Black and White men. The muted tongues of Black women have protected Black men because the women do not want their voices to be an instrument that further neuters Black men, while White men have been empowered by the silence of Black women as well as the silence of the American justice system. Alice Walker received as a result of describing the physical, sexual, and psychological abuse endured by her main character, Celie, when her novel entitled *The Color Purple*. Alice Walker violated the code of silence surrounding physical, emotional, and sexual abuse in the Black community.

In literature, the psychological insights of the character expressed with the help of literary technique, dramatic monologue. The dramatic monologue is a lyric poem in which the speaker addresses a silent listener, revealing themselves in the context of a dramatic situation. Moreover, the character is speaking to an identifiable but silent listener at a dramatic moment in the speaker's life. The circumstances surrounding the conversation, one side which we "hear" as the dramatic monologue, are made by clear implication, and an insight into the character of the speaker. The monologues of every character in the poem *for coloured girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf* is a painful ramble of day to day experience of Black women. The Black women as a speaker here narrates her life's struggle and psychological trauma and wounds to the silent listeners.

In "abortion cycle#1", the lady blue through her monologue shares her pain and sufferings that she endured during her abortion. The abortion here in her context done because of the shame of ending an unwanted pregnancy. The lady in blue says "i cdnt have people/lookin at me/pregnant" (36). This shows her fear of what others would think of her and her baby. The society made her to take up abortion as the

ultimate solution for living with pride. The lady blue continuously utters that she is shameful of herself. The conventions of life are constructed only by the society. These conventions and orders pave the way for stereotype. Hence the stereotypical qualities like women should be virgin, silent, kind, sensitive and meek are ingrained in the society. These are unconsciously and consciously imbibed by women. These psychological conflicts affect women's life in choosing her own decision and others. That is why lady in blue chose to abort her pregnancy to free herself from shame and hatred of the society.

The monologue is addressed by the speaker to the silent listener. Women started to voice out for their struggles and oppressions to the society through various mediums. They voiced out through literature, oration, media and other sources. They tried to reach the silent listeners and make them feel their emotions and pains but the silent listeners remained silent and thus the women themselves picked silence as their trait to hide and heal.

Throughout the play all the seven characters deliver their monologues and they exchange some words between them. This shows women's feeling and anguish is felt by other women and not by men. In "latent rapists" the ladies exchange their ideas about how their male friends turn to be rapists. The lady in red, purple and blue exchanges their acceptance of known male friends when one among them confesses her bitter experience. Acceptance and good listening heals the wounded person. Shange weaves these monologues with two to three characters to show how Black women experience pain and how it is accepted by other Black women because it shows that it happens to them just because they are coloured.

Although many of the poems in *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf* are recited by individual women, there is a strong undercurrent

of sisterhood and communality - especially since the women do not have names. The ladies often participate in weaving the stories together, sometimes contributing lines and characters. They dance and sing together, and when one woman is speaking, the others serve as chorus. In “pyramid,” they deal with falling in love with the same man and emerge from heartbreak, able to retain their bond. By the end of the play, they reaffirm solidarity and join together in an exultant celebration of themselves. While the women can certainly make things difficult for other women, they also realize that there is a great deal of value and strength in female friendships.

In psychology, self-actualization is achieved when you’re able to reach your full potential. Being truly self-actualized is considered the exception rather than the rule since most people are working to meet more pressing needs. Self-actualization is the end result that Shange stresses in her poem “laying hands”. When self-actualized, one listens to her inner voice, takes responsibility and learns who and what she is: she sorts what she needs from what she does not need and what she wants from what she does not want. Every decision a Black woman makes is influenced by dominant perceptions of Black womanhood and perceptions of Black womanhood in the form of negative images is available to everyone with whom a Black woman comes in contact. Shange ends her work with self-actualization which Abraham Maslow in *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development* encouraged as “an acceptance of people as they are at their intrinsic core” (104). Self-actualization, Shange says in her second publication of *for coloured girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf*, it is “not a lament but a fierce declaration of independence.” In the poem, the lady in green describes a relationship gone sour and speaks out against the man who has taken a part of her. The lady in green is bold and persistent, saying “this is a woman's trip & i need my stuff” (63) and “this is mine / ntozake ‘her own

things’/that’s my name / now give me my stuff” (64). She is proud of her flaws and idiosyncrasies, owning her scars. She concedes she may have been a little quick and a little weak in relinquishing that stuff in the first place, but clearly she has learned from those mistakes and is now empowered enough to tell this man to “find yr own things/ and leave this package / of me for my destiny” (65). She ends on a note of self-actualization, realizing “I’m / the only one/ can handle it” (65).

Sometimes people experience events that are so painful that one’s sense of self is fractured. When this happens, one is no longer the same person (shattered since of self) one no longer sees the world the same way (altered world view). This is the very definition of psychic trauma. All traumas have a psychic component. While violence is usually thought of as physical, mistreatment of a nature deep enough to cause a shattered sense of self and an altered worldview is psychic trauma and leaves a trace on the psyche of its target.

Societies that are oppressed put a large emphasis on staying together in order to stand against the oppressors. Shange chose not to ignore the oppression occurring within the Black Community. Her writing assumed the struggles of women within the Black culture. Often the play pointed to Black men as one of the leading oppressors in Black women’s lives. Poems such as “latent rapists” and “a nite with beau willie brown,” showed Black men not only as lovers and husbands, but as rapists and abusers as well. The abuses faced by Black women started from slavery and still it prevails. In “latent rapists” and “graduation nite” the abuses are caused by the known male friends and not strangers. The lady in red says “cuz it turns out the nature of the rape has changed” (34). The pain and agony of the women are known through these lines,

we cd even have em over for dinner

&get raped in our own houses

by invitation

A friend. (35)

In her introduction to the second publication of *Shange for coloured girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf* wrote, “the poems introduce the girls to other kinds of people of color, other worlds. To adventure, kindness, and cruelty. Cruelty that we usually think we face alone, but we don’t. We discover that by sharing with each other we find strength to go on” (15). Thus *for coloured girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf* is a celebration of both cultural and gender identity. It is intended by Shange as a handbook for Black girls in order to understand their own lives. Shange explains her intentions in Neal Leicester’s *Ntozake Shange: A Critical Study of the Plays* as,

It’s the silence of the mothers that is so shattering. The mothers know that it’s a dreadful proposition to give up one’s life for one’s handy and one’s mate and, therefore, lose one’s self in the process of caring and tending for others. To send one’s daughter off to that kind of self-sacrifice and silence with no preparation is a mortal sin for me. To do this without tell her that this is a sacrifice is so unnecessary. To break this silence is my responsibility, and I’m absolutely committed to it. When I die, I will not be guilty of having left a generation of girls behind thinking that anyone can tend to their emotional health other than themselves (28).

The clear message to Black women has been to shut up and suffer in silence. Likewise, Black women’s silence has empowered White men because in the past, Black women have feared repercussions against them and those they love. This

knowledge, coupled with the lack of laws protecting Black women, empowered White men to continue the physical and sexual abuse of Black women for centuries. The women in *for coloured girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf* are firmly entrenched in modern-day America. Their perspective is relatable and although they are only defined by the colour of their dresses, they share deeply personal stories about marginalization and isolation. They feel lonely even when they are among people, describing crowded cities filled with men, the threat of domestic abuse, and a pervading sense of cruelty, racism, and indifference. The women in *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when rainbow is enuf* are seeking fulfilling love. Over the course of the choreopoem, they start to learn how to articulate what they want in a man. Each one desires someone who makes her feel special and supports her. As young women, they make the mistake of compromising themselves in the pursuit of love and meet with disappointment when the men they choose or who choose them cannot be what they want. Their sorrows are immediately relatable to most men and women who have experienced a painful relationship. Shange captures the raw pain of unrequited love, lost love, and broken love. Finally, the ladies learn to love themselves and articulate their wants and needs. In terms of their interior lives, many of the women are profoundly estranged from their lovers, their friends, and even themselves. Ultimately, they realize that in order to be fulfilled in love, they must accept themselves and rely on their fellow women for support.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Between 1974 and 1982, Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* transformed from a loosely connected group of poems and improvised dances performed in small Northern California venues, to a stage production that ran on Broadway for two years, to a telefilm broadcast nationally on American Playhouse. *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* is most often praised for the vitality of its language, and for its introduction of a new form the choreopoem to the American theater. In light of its several successful metamorphoses, the poem's greatest strength, like that of the women it depicts, is its ability to adapt and endure. This adaptability stems from its origins as a hybrid work comprised of poetry, dance and music, as well as from Shange's impressive capacity to collaborate, improvise and allow *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* to morph as necessary for shifting audiences and mediums.

A variety of influences would encourage her art and personal development. In 1973 Shange moved to San Francisco, and her poems and writings were praised and acknowledged by putting them in published books. An example of this is seen in one

piece of work, which was placed in a collection called, *Time to Greez Incantations from the Third World*. Shange's dream is to express herself through writing. Along with writing, Shange was reciting her poetry with a group known as the Third World Collective in various women's bars. Soon, dance was incorporated as Shange began studying choreography linked to the Caribbean and West Mica Shange explored her spirituality by studying religions such as Vudon, better known as Voodoo, from Haiti, and Santeria as practiced in Cuba.

Shange studied dance, religion, art, writing, culture, and music. During this time she began, in earnest, to explore her life, identity, and experiences and incorporate them into her art. An article called *African American Writers* by Lea Baechler chronicling great Mican American writers' states, "By discovering in movement some of the intricacies and strengths of her identity as a Black woman, Shange found that she was also discovering her voice as a poet" (381). Shange also worked with different dance troupes, one of which, was Hal& Osumare's The Spirit of Dance. Shange picked up experience in the theatre working and producing performances. This experience was followed by her leaving the dance company in 1974 to collaborate with "The Sound Clinic," Paula Moss and Jean Desarrne and his Reggae Blues Band. The accomplishments of this group eventually turned into *for colored girls who have considered suicide1 when the rainbow is enuf*.

Ntozake Shange's work embodies a wide range of genres and all oppressions that inherent in the society. Her works polarize life and art. These polarizations Shange's work both contribute to her artistry and complicate it. She has been criticized and praised for her unconventional language and structure, for her almost religious feminism, and for her stand on black or white and male or female issues. Her plays have evoked a range of critical responses commensurate with their

unconventional nature. Shange's choreopoem, made up of poetry, drama, prose, and autobiography, are unified by a militant feminism in which some critics have seen a one-sided attack on black men. Others, however, point out the youthful spirit, flair with language, and lyricism that carry her plays to startling and radical conclusions.

Shange style and its seeming contradictions, such as the use of both black English and the erudite vocabulary of the educated, are at the heart of her drama. First among the contradictions or contrasts is her blending of genres: Her poems shade into drama, her dramas are essentially verse monologues, and her novels incorporate poetic passages. Second, her language varies radically on a single page and even in a single phrase from black dialect like "cuz," "wanna," "awready," "chirren". In the published texts of her poetry, plays, and essays, in addition to simplified phonetic spellings, she employs the slash instead of the period and omits capitalization. Many recordings of her work are available, and these provide the listener with a much fuller sense of the dynamic quality of her language in performance.

Shange's bold and daring use of language, her respect for people formerly given little value, and her exploration of the roles of black men and women have opened a new dimension in theater. Her blendings of poetry, music, and dance bring theater back to its origins and simultaneously blaze a trail toward the drama of the future. Black life and their struggles are one of the relevant theme found in all of Shange's work. In *A Photograph*, a set of meditations and sketches involving an ideal black woman named Michael and her lover Sean, a failed photographer, Shange explores her idea of art "the poetry of a moment" as well as representative stages of the African American experience.

The entire play demands that the audience not overlook the pain of women, but rather face it and relate it to their own lives. Crystal or any other character cannot be ignored. “a nite with beau willie brown” is the climax of the play. This poem contains the most anger and tragedy in the piece. Crystal has lost her pride, her strength, her relationship, and her children. This character has hit bottom with no place left to go, leaving the audience hopeless, but in the end Shange replenishes hope. Following this, the final poem, and like the first, is a gathering of women. Directly after “a nite with beau willie brown,” the poem concludes with a calling of women to bond together. The final poem, “a laying on of hands” is unlike the first because it calls the women to act or be reborn. It calls for women to transcend the pain created by their harsh experiences and to respect and take pride in themselves. As “dark phrases” describes being born outside of society, “a laying of hands” depicts being reborn. It is an epiphany of sorts, but not an ending, for each of these women's tales goes on into greater pain and joy.

The final poem calls upon women to take their sexuality, their bodies, and power and have an experience of, “all the gods comin into me I layin' me open to myself” (Shange 61). Shange uses the analogy of a “layin on of hands,” to suggest healing through the support of other women. It is clear within the poem as Shange writes, ‘hot a man,’ and “not my mama,” that she is asking women to pull themselves up from the ground (62). The power to continue and have one's self must come from inside a Black woman, and not from society. Society does not offer a woman control, but rather a feeling of powerlessness. One of the last phrases written in the play is an affirmation for Black women and it gives them power, “I found god in myself & I loved her/ I loved her fiercely.” The very last line of the play restates Shange intentions, “& this is for colored girls who have considered suicide but are movin to

the ends of their own rainbows” (64). The poem sends the message to love and heal yourself because nobody else can do it for you. As a whole, the performance is not just poetry or a set of stories put together, it is a total sensory experience for the audience. The actor must not only speak the words, but move to them as well. The dance is not always done to music. Sometimes the actor makes her own beat through phrasing. In many ways, it requires an actor to movement without restraint. The poetry and dance must portray the emotion of the story.

The women in the choreopem start out as adolescents who do not understand themselves. They struggle to accept their race, gender, and their places in the world. They make mistakes in early relationships because they are desperate for love but behave as though they do not deserve it. However, they move from ignorance and confusion to self-awareness and self-actualization. Self-actualization is the ultimate result of rebirth and spirit filled life. Shange gives a message to all the black women to rebirth from all the traumas and pains.

The women arrive triumphantly at the play’s end, finding god in themselves, they discover an inner strength, a greater sense of self, and an independence that will allow them to deal better with emotionally and psychologically unsatisfying relationships in the future. They realize that they must love themselves before they can love fully or accept love. Patricia Young indicates that the concluding gesture in the play is powerful; the seven women experience a laying on of hands as they lock their hands together to represent an impenetrable circle that stands as a shield from pain and to empower themselves with each other’s courage. Shange emphasizes that women must nurture and protect one another.

Shange uses metaphor for the word rainbow in her title *for coloured girls who have considered/when suicide is enuf*. The rainbow can be taken as the symbol of

hope. The rainbow has seven colours likewise Shange introduces seven coloured women. It is known fact that rainbow appears after a heavy downpour as a symbol of visible clear sky. Likewise, the Black women undergo various struggles during their life. The hope like a rainbow appears always in front of them. Shange says it is in their hands to choose the path of rainbow even there are difficulties around them. She wants all the Black women to choose the path of hope. Like Shange introduced choreopoem by breaking all the norms of theatre and drama. Not only the coloured women but altogether all women should break the stereotypical norms and psychological traumas that each one of us carrying within ourselves. Every woman should come out of shame and pain. Women should choose the path of hope and live as a powerful being in the society. The women learn to celebrate their physical appearance, their female friendships, their scars, their successes, and their connection to something more powerful and divine. By the end of the piece, they become fully-fledged human beings, unique and powerful, glorious even when flawed.

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Portrayal of Caste and Gender Discrimination in Baby Kamble's *The Prison We Broke*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

BHARATHI.R

(REG. NO. 19APEN08)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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CONTENTS

DECLARATION

CERTIFICATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO
ONE	INTRODUCTION	1
TWO	CASTE DISCRIMINATION	11
THREE	GENDER DISCRIMINATION	27
FOUR	AN EXPRESSION OF CHANGE	39
FIVE	SUMMATION	51
	WORKS CITED	58

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Portrayal of Caste and Gender Discrimination in Baby Kamble's *The Prison We Broke*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

THOOTHUKUDI

BHARATHI. R

APRIL 2021

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Portrayal of Caste and Gender Discrimination in Baby Kamble's *The Prison We Broke*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Bharathi.R during the year 2019-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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EXAMINER

PRINCIPAL

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Portrayal of Caste and Gender Discrimination in Baby Kamble's *The Prison We Broke*** highlights the caste and gender conflicts faced by the Mahar community people in the dominating society and the change that made them to overcome the struggles.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the introductory note of the author and her works of honor, the evolution of Indian autobiographical novel and provides information about history of Indian Literature.

The second chapter **Caste Discrimination** deals with the racial conflicts of suffering and struggles of lower class people in the day-to-day life of Maharashtra under the high class dominating society.

The third chapter **Gender Discrimination** focuses the women in the Mahar community. The women were considered to be slaves and have undergone several struggles in their life because of male domination.

The fourth chapter deals with **An Expression of Change** portrays the changes in the mind and life of the Mahar people, by the influence of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It also presents the narrative technique employed by the writer and validates the study.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Literature is the word used to define life in written materials and sometimes can also be spoken. Derived from the Latin word literature meaning writing formed with letters. Literature helps the reader to understand the important moral and political issues. At times it provides solution to the problems faced by the people in their day. Works of literature, at their best, provide a kind of blueprint of human society. From the epics of Homer to the plays of William Shakespeare, from Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte to Maya Angelou, works of literature give insight and context to the entire world's society. In this way, literature is more than just a historical or cultural artifact; it can serve as an introduction to a new world of experience.

Indian English Literature has a relatively recent history, being one and a half centuries old. In its early stages, western novels influenced Indian English Literature. Early Indian writers used English mixed by Indian words to convey an experience that was essentially Indian. The first book written by an Indian in English was *Travel of Dean Mohomed* (1793) a travel narrative by Sake Mohomed published in England.

Indian English literature is the body of work by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. Its early history began with the works of Michael Madhusudan Dutt followed by R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao who contributed to Indian fiction in the 1930s. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian diaspora who are of Indian descent. It is frequently referred as Indo-Anglican literature.

Dalit is the word used in Hindi and Marathi by the time of 1930's which was referred as depressed classes by the British and now as scheduled castes. Dalit, meaning broken or scattered in Sanskrit and Hindi, is a term mostly used for the ethnic groups in India that have kept repressed.

The term dalits was in use as a translation for the British Raj census classification of Depressed Classes prior to 1935. It was popularised by the economist and reformer B. R. Ambedkar, who included all depressed people irrespective of their caste into the definition of dalits. The Labor Party was the first group he formed and included as its members all people of the society who were kept depressed, including woman, small-scale farmers and people from backward castes. Ambedkar himself was a Mahar, and in the 1970s the use of the word dalit was invigorated when it was adopted by the dalit Panthers activist group.

In 1932, the British Raj recommended separate electorates to select leaders for Dalits in the Communal Award. This was favored by Ambedkar but when Mahatma Gandhi opposed the proposal it resulted in the Poona Pact. That in turn influenced the Government of India Act, 1935, which introduced the reservation of seats for the Depressed Classes, now renamed as Scheduled Castes. From soon after its independence in 1947, India introduced a reservation system to enhance the ability of Dalits to have political representation and to obtain government jobs and education.

Dalit literature is written by Dalits about their sufferings and their lives. Initially Dalit literature was written in Marathi language, and then in Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Bangla and Tamil languages. One of the earliest Dalit writers was Madara Chennaiah, a 11th-century saint who lived during the reign of Western Chalukyas, who is also is regarded as father of Vachana poetry. Modern Dalit writings emerged as a specific genre on behalf of the democratic thinkers like B. R. Ambedkar, Jyothiba

Phule, Sree Narayana Guru, Iyothee Thass, Sahodaran Ayyappan, Ayyankali and other who fought against caste oppression.

The term Dalit literature was first used by the Dalit writer Baburao Bagul in 1958 at the first conference of Maharashtra Sahitya Sangha in Mumbai. His writings brought new momentum to Dalit literature in Marathi. Annabhau Sathe is considered as the father of Dalit Literature. Dalit Literature got a recognition in India with the English translation of Marathi Dalit writings. The first books that popularized Dalit Literature in India are *An Anthology of Dalit Literature* and *Poisoned Bread: Translation from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature* (1992).

There are four major classification of caste in India. They are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Shudras. This system of classification is based on the work they do. Apart from that the fifth category consists of Dalit who were the untouchables.

Although the government had prohibited the social discrimination people were still segregated in societies, especially in rural areas. These so-called untouchables are not even allowed to enter the houses of so-called higher and middle-castes. They were socially suppressed by the upper classes and on the other hand they suffer from poverty. Poverty seems to be in a peak in these socially backward people.

Dalit writing is a post-Independence literary phenomenon. The emergence of Dalit literature has a great historical significance. The causes and effects leading to the age-old existence of oppression and despair of the lives of marginalized class of nation's vast population are also observed in many other parts of the world. In India it was under the pretext of the Caste and in the western world it was under the name of the Race. Inequality was the main source of this marginality which led to insecurity,

injustice and exploitation. Marginalized sections were always on the periphery and distanced from the power centers.

Dalits were always on the marginalized other side of the Indian society. When they started voicing after centuries of silence, about themselves, we have the literature depicting assertion of human rights, self-pride, revolt against social injustice, chronicles of personal and collective suffering, and hopes and aspirations for a new society devoid of discrimination. Dalit is not a caste; it is a symbol of change and revolution. The Primary motive of Dalit literature is the liberation, the struggle against caste tradition has a long history. Some of the important writers whose writings find a place are Mahasweta Devi, Namdeo Dhasal, Daya Pawar, Arjun Dangle, Sachi Rautray, Rabi Singh, Basudev Sunani, Bama, Abhimani, Poomani, Imayam, Marku, Mangal Rathod, Neerave Patel, Perumal Murugan, Palamalai, Sudhakar, D. Gopi and others.

In the year 1992, Indian Literature virtually started a new chapter, with the publication of Arjun Dangle's *Poisoned Bread*, which was the first ever attempt to anthologize Dalit writings in English. He involved the entire genre available in Marathi Dalit literature-poetry, short stories, essays, autobiographical excerpts and public speeches. As a result, today we have several collections of Dalit writings coming out in both Indian languages and English. Following are some of the most widely read writers of Dalit literature that are available in English translation-Barma's *Karukku* and *Sangati*, Dr. Narendra Jadhav's *Untouchables: My Family's Triumphant Journey Out of the Caste System in Modern India*, Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outside: Akkarmashi*, Joseph Macwan's *The Stepchild*, Om Prakash Valmiki's *Joothan: A Dalit's Life*, Baby Kamble's *Our Existence* and Imayam's *Beats of Burden*, Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life*. Some of the prominent Dalit writers

are Daya Pawar, Arjun Dangle, Baburao Bagul, Rabi Singh, Namdeo Dhasal, Dutta Bhagat, Lakshman Mane, Neerave Patel, Palamalai and Sudhakar. There are number of other writers writing Dalit literature but do not share the Dalit writers' category as the latter are not Dalit by birth as the other Dalit writers by birth. Mahasweta Devi, Sara Joseph, Kumaran Asan, Mulkraj Anand and Premchand are some of the well-known names writing in diverse Indian languages.

Namdeo Laxman Dhasal was a Marathi poet, writer and Dalit activist from Maharashtra. Some of his notable works are *Andhale Shatak*, *Moorkh Mhataryane*, *Tujhilyatta Kanchi*, and *PriyaDarshini*. Datta Bhagat is a noted Marathi playwright and one of the leaders of the Dalit theater movement in Marathi. His play *Avart* was critically acclaimed for reflection on Dalit oppression against the background of a pilgrimage to Pandharpur. His other play *Wata Palwata* is included in the collection of Indian plays *Drama Contemporary* by Erin B Mee. It is considered to be a milestone in Marathi Theater. He is also noted for his literary criticism, particularly the essay *Dalit chetna aur Marathi Dalit Rangmanch*.

Neerav Patal wrote Dalit poetry based on Dalit people who are suffering atrocities, exploitation, discrimination and segregation. He pioneered the movement of Gujarati Dalit literature, publishing the first ever Gujarati Dalit literary magazine *Akrosh* in 1978 under the auspices of the Dalit Panther of Gujarat. He edited short-lived Gujarati magazines with others namely *Kalo Suraj*, *Sarvanam*, *Swamanand Vacha*.

Dalit feminism is a feminist perspective that includes questioning caste and gender roles among the Dalit population and within feminism and the larger women's movement. Dalit women primarily live in South Asia, mainly in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Dalit women face different challenges than women in

higher castes in these countries. They are more likely to be poor, uneducated and socially marginalized. Dalit feminists advocate and have advocated for equal rights for Dalit women based on gender, caste and other issues. They have addressed conferences, created organizations and helped elect other Dalit women into political office.

Ilavenil Meena Kandaswamy works centered on feminism and the anti-caste Caste Annihilation Movement of the contemporary Indian milieu. As of 2013, Meena has published two collections of poetry namely, *Touch*(2006) and *Ms. Militancy* (2010). Two of her poems have won accolades in all-India poetry competitions. Sharmila Rege was one of the leading feminist scholars in India, whose work in developing a Dalit Standpoint Perspective has been crucial in opening up feminist debates in India to questions of class, caste, religion and sexuality.

Urmila Pawar is an Indian writer and activist. She is a prominent figure in the dalit and feminist movements in India. Pawar's autobiography *Aidan*, which was one of the first of its kind account by a dalit woman. The book was later translated into English by Wandana Sonalkar and released under the title *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs*. Palani is an Indian Dalit-Feminist writer, former IAS officer and activist predominantly writing in Tamil. Her notable works include *Pazhayani Kazhidalum*, *Kurruku Vettu*, *Nalum Thodarum* and *Kadaisi Mandhar*. Barna known as Barna Faustina Soosairaj rose's autobiographical novel *Karukku* (1992), shows the joys and sorrows experienced by Dalit Christian women in Tamil Nadu. She subsequently wrote two more novels, *Sangati* (1994) and *Vanmam* (2002) along with two short stories: *Kusumbukkaran* (1996) and *Oru Tattvum Erumaiyum* (2003). In addition to this she has written twenty short stories.

Baby Kamble was an Indian activist and writer. She was born into Mahar, one of the largest untouchable communities in Maharashtra. She was a well-known Dalit activist and writer who was inspired by B. R. Ambedkar. Kamble and her family converted to Buddhism and remained lifelong practicing Buddhists. In her community, she came to be admired as a writer and was fondly called as Tai meaning sister. She is widely remembered and loved by the Dalit community for her contributions of powerful literary and activist work. She is one of the earliest women writers from the untouchable communities whose distinctive reflexive style of feminist writing setting her apart from other Dalit writers and upper caste women writers whose gaze was limited and reflexivity incarcerated in caste and masculinity.

Kamble is critically acclaimed and known for her autobiographical work *Jina Amucha*, written in Marathi. The title *Jina Amucha* literally means Our Existence, which is reflective of the existence of the Dalits, often reduced to absence by the upper castes and powerful people. Feminist scholar Maxine Bernstein was instrumental in encouraging Baby Tai Kamble to publish her writings which Kamble had kept as a secret from the family. Bernstein discovered Kamble's interest and her writings in Phaltan where Bernstein was conducting her research. She encouraged and persuaded Baby Tai to publish her writings which soon became one of the best autobiographical accounts on caste, poverty, violence, and triple discrimination faced by Dalit women. This auto-narrative chronicles Baby Tai's life story in precolonial to postcolonial India. It is deeply embedded with two important critical moments in the Indian history: freedom from the British rule and anti-caste movement led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Thus, Kamble's auto-biography is just not personal account of a woman's life history but it is a deeply political and a critical record of the making of the nation from the vantage point of a very precarious social location. *Jina Amucha* public

contribution is it is a nation's biography chronicled from the untouchable woman's point of view. It is also therefore a critical account the nation and its margins: lives of untouchables in caste Hindu society.

One of the major portions of the book articulates caste and gender discrimination and multilayered violence suffered by Dalit women at the hands of the savarna caste Hindus and Dalit men. Kamble writes from an untouchable woman's perspective, not deterring from naming patriarchy in the untouchable community nor sparing the internalized patriarchy to Dalit women. Kamble also underscores how the caste Hindu women and men treated untouchable with contempt, disgust, and hate. The work became one of the most powerful and poignant auto-biographical writing in Marathi. The book was translated into English titled *The Prisons We Broke* by Maya Pandit and published by Orient Blackswan. Kamble wrote several articles and poems focused on Dalits and ran a residential school for children from vulnerable communities. She died on 21 April 2012, aged 82, in Phaltan, Maharashtra.

The Prisons We Broke is the first work that comes in Dalit Literature which is written by a woman. It is because of that itself, the book deals with the two major problems of the society: firstly, the oppression and exploitation of the Dalit by the upper class: secondly, the discrimination towards women in a patriarchal society. In the memoir, the retrospections of the author flow out profusely in beautiful colors. She talks about the life in her village, called Veergaon. In her memory, the Maharwadas never had a prosperous life. On one side, ignorance and lack of reasoning ruled them, on the other side, the Maharwadas life was dominated by poverty and epidemics. Death rate was high because of the ceaseless starvation and lack of medical facilities for the fatal epidemics. More over superstitions adorned their blindness.

Though Hindu Religion and gods considered Mahars as dirt, Mahar community upheld the Hindu principles and they thought of gods with great sanctity. Potrajas, and possessed women are common in the village. They never forget to give offerings to gods. Generations after generations Mahar community broke their heads on the stones of Hindu temples with hopes. But the effect was curses. They cried at the feet of idles with hopes. But the gods never heard them. They smeared kumkum and haldi on the gods. The possessed women are greeted with respect. It is believed that they could speak about the future of the Maharwada, and they could bless them with good wishes. So they often practiced the rituals that are taught by the same religion which considered the Mahars as dirt.

Poverty was an unresolved problem among the Mahars. They were fated to eat left-overs. The stale bhakris, and the rotten rotis were their common food. Upper caste considered them as the dirt in the garbage where others throw away their waste materials. Mahars had to fight with the animals like cats, dogs and vultures for their food. They were the masters of the dead animals. The upper caste Brahmins wiped away all the human qualities from the Mahars and converted them into beasts. They were enclosed in dark cells, and their hands and foot were in the chains of slavery. Mahars also valorize the prestige of Yeskar stick. And they thought that it is their duty to work for their masters. They never had complaints. They lead a very satisfactory life. They ate the leftovers and were content. They accepted their fate as part of their life. They considered themselves as untouchables. For their hardships, and laborious work for their masters, they earned miseries and abuses as remuneration. Even in their poverty stricken life, they never forgot to love each other and show kindness to their fellowmen. Generations after generations, the Mahars served their masters very obediently. The upper caste community threw abuses at the Mahars, if

they did not fall at the feet of their masters, or if they did not give the way to their masters when the masters came across in their way.

The condition of the Mahar women was miserable. They had to do all the house hold duties, and go for selling wood to earn for their daily bread. They collected all the left over from other places to give them to their children. Most of the time women had to go on hunger unendingly. When a ritual comes, the work of the women got doubled. They had to plaster their house with cow dung, and clean the utensils and the clothes. Girls got married at the age of eight or nine. And they became pregnant at a very tender age which created a lot of complications in their first delivery. They lead a very pathetic life in their husband's home. If a girl could not do the house hold duties, she was abused by her in-laws. She could not go back to her home also, in the fear of scolding from her father and brothers.

The author talks about the influence of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the memoir. Ambedkar was the light of their life. He asked the Mahars to educate their children, and inspired them to fight against the atrocities. He asked them not to give offerings to the gods who never cared about them. And he also asked them not to eat the dead animals. Kamble and her relatives actively participated in the revolutionary activities. She was very much influenced by Ambedkar. She loved her father also. Her father often told not to work for money. Money is not the ever valuable thing in the world. The value of money will go, when we become poor. But the dignity that we earned in the course of our life will be there to support us. Money cannot always give us a satisfaction to our life. Author and her relatives and some of her friends went to school. They were ill-treated by the teachers and others in the upper caste. But they managed to survive. Author is very much influenced by the movie Sati Savithri. Ambedkar's speech reverberated in the village, and the villagers reiterated his words.

In the last part of her book, Kamble talked about the responsibility of the present society. Even now, discrimination is not completely wiped out from our society. There are a lot of villages which should be brought into the light of main stream. The educated people should work for them. Once, Baba Sahib worked for the community. That is why the society got freedom. Now those who enjoy freedom should work to unchain others. As a reader, one could hear another reformer's sound in Baby Kamble's voice. A new inspiration is born out of her voice. Education, prosperity and comforts make us aware of the problem of society.

CHAPTER TWO

CASTE DISCRIMINATION

Dr. Ambedkar first defines castes as given by Senart, Nesfield, Riseley and Dr. Ketkar. As long as caste in India does exist, Hindus will hardly intermarry or have any social intercourse with outsiders, and if Hindus migrate to other region on earth, Indian caste would become a world problem. Dalits in India have long been marginalized, stigmatized and disenfranchised because of their low castes. The caste system in Indian has destroyed the very existence of the low caste human beings by stamping them as polluting agents. They were forced to live on the outskirts of the localities. They were assigned odd jobs and committed services to the high castes. They were not given education rather any attempt of disobeying the sacred code of conduct was a serious and punishable crime for them. In a nutshell, the low castes- Dalits- were the sub- human beings living life worse than animals. On the contrary, the high caste people were the masters of the low castes and were privileged to live life with all luxuries and comfort. The trials, tribulations and trivialities of the life of the low caste people were the results of exploitative practices perpetuated through dominant ideologies created by the high castes. It could be rightly understood in the words of Marx and Engels. They have stated

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideals of those who lack the means of

material production are on the whole subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped as ideas... (67)

It clearly shows that those who are dominant in the society create dominant discourses to propagate their ideas as a common sense. They form ideological apparatuses to maintain power and further they subjugate the powerless. In the Indian context, the high caste groups of people created socio-religious structures to enslave the low castes. Through such ideological constructs, the high caste people bound the low castes to the periphery and restricted their activities to certain restricted limits. They were deliberately forced to remain illiterate and become detached from every source of self-realization, self-up-gradation and positive change. Consequently, the Dalits were made slaves, ready to behave as per the wills and wishes of the high caste people. It is quite clear that the degradation of dalits and bound them in the shackles of bonded labour.

The word 'Dalit' in Marathi literally means "broken". It was first used by Jyotibharao Phule in the nineteenth century, in the context of oppression faced by the untouchables. The term 'Dalits' expresses poverty and humiliation of a particular section of Indian society at the hands of the upper caste. It is the literary expression of the helplessness of Dalit people. The upper caste Hindus treat them as untouchables and they are not allowed to enter a temple or any other sacred places.

Dalit's life was barred from all directions. They were enforced to live in acute poverty and starvation. Their-sided marginalization was the cause of their poverty. It was synonymous with hunger, malnutrition, degradation, and poverty. This varied nature of dalit degradation has been realistically captured by Kamble in the beginning of the autobiography. She describes how most houses were scrubbed with mud and

were stricken by extreme poverty. She narrates the stark poverty in the following words

The walls were nothing but stones arranged vertically with some mud quoting. They were tiny huts really. There would be a big clay pot with a small mouth kept at the entrance for Drinking water. The pot was called keli. The mouth would Be covered with a broken coconut shell which also served as A clay Chula, near which lay a couple of clay pots, a wooden Pali, and a tawa...there would be a wooden katwat, for Rolling the dough and a long piece of tin for turning the Bhakri while baking it. A grind stone would be in the Corner this description clearly shows the wretched living Conditions of the Mahar community in Veergaon. (9)

Kamble subtly observes the acute poverty of Mahars in her village and gives references to the objects like the broken utensils, wooden pots, dirty children and dusty people in Maharwada. The malevolence of the caste tyranny had not only affected dalits' socio-economic status but also destroyed their sense of living. The acute poverty had occupied their life with broken equipment which forced them to live filthy life worse than that of animals. She narrates the saga of their poverty and filthiness inflicted on them by the tyranny of the caste system. She says

People would be covered in thick layers of dust and dirt, a black Quoting on their skin. You could see the deep marks where Moisture had trickled down. Hairs, untouched by oil, fell over their shoulders in thick tangles. They looked like rag dolls, Nibbled and torn by sharp-teethed mice. The thick tangles of Hair would be infested with eggs.

Children looked as if they had rolled in mud, snot dripping from their nose in green gooey lines... (8)

Kamble narrates simple and very common incidents in the life of dalit but highlights the serious and grave effects of caste system on the life of the low castes. The caste stratification was strictly based on the power relations and unfortunately all powers were controlled by the high caste. It is reflected in every act of the high caste. During the buffalo fair, the preparations were being made by the Mahars and Mangs but the honour of Sacrificing buffalo was given to the high caste Patil and filthy job of skinning the buffalo was for the Mahar. Even in the festivals and fairs the caste hierarchy was being maintained. Apart from that, the hungry dalits would enjoy the fair because it was the only opportunity for them to extinguish the fire of hunger. They would desperately wait for the fair because it was the hope for survival. The miserable condition and struggle for mere survival of dalits has rightly been pin pointed in the following words. "Memories of the buffalo fair would help them survive their miserable and wretched lives. They would live in their dirt pits on the periphery of the village, like discarded rags, ignored by society, and wait for the buffalo fair to come again in the following year". (35)

The fierce manners of upper caste people, particularly their cultural, religious, and political practices, drastically affected the lives of the low castes. According to Hindu belief, dalits were avarnas (Outcaste) and were not supposed to get education or obtain even basic knowledge about anything. They were deliberately kept illiterate to engulf their life with superstitions and false beliefs. Kamble discloses this iniquitous trick of the high caste people, she says

The entire community had sunk deep in the mire of such dreadful superstitions. The upper castes had never allowed this Lowly caste of

ours to acquire knowledge. Generations after Generations, our people rotted and perished by following such a Superstitious way of life. Yet, we kept believing in your Hindu Religion and serving you faithfully.

(37)

The discrimination to Mahar community begins from the very childhood days till end. In the book we come to know that all Mahar girls are neglected in school by upper caste girls because of the fear of getting polluted. “All the girls in the class had benches to sit except us Mahar girls. We had to sit on the floor in one corner of the classroom like diseased puppies” (129) Even if upper caste girls pass by them they would cover their nose, and run away as if these Dalit girls are not humans but foul-smelling corpses. One of the upper caste girls says that she was made to have a bath after she reached home from school as her mother didn’t allow her in because she had come to know that Mahar girls too sit in that class.

Our school was predominantly high caste. A majority of girls in our class longed to the higher castes. For the first time in their Lives, they had girls like us – who could pollute them – studying with them. They treated us like lepers, as if our bodies dripped with dirty blood or as if pus oozed out of our rotted flesh. If they had to pass by us, they would cover their nose, mutter ‘chee, chee’, and run as if their lives were in mortal danger. The teacher had allotted us a place in a corner near the door from where we could No move till school was over for the say. The blackboard would be in another corner. We could neither see what the teacher was writing on the board, nor could we raise our doubts in the Classroom. If we went to drink at the school tap, the other Girls would raise hell. (108)

The high castes played with the lives of the low castes and it was all for no fault on their parts. The shroud high caste Hindus had created such a mechanism that the low castes would automatically get grinded for no reason. The low castes were never accepted as human beings. The caste system was the ideological apparatus of the high castes formed to ostracize the low castes and permanently blind them in the shackles of slavery. There was no scope for dalits to get education, learn life skills and to make change in their life. The multifaceted slavery not only affected their physic but it rather injured their psyche. They suffered from loss of self confidence and self esteem. The low castes were stamped as untouchables and enforced to live on the outer edge of the village. Their reason was gagged. They were compelled to grow up on garbage heaps along with the stray animals. Kamble describes the trivial living conditions of the low castes to underline the devastating effects of the caste system on the low castes. She says

Our place was in the garbage pits outside the village, where everyone threw away their waste. That was where we lived, in our Poor huts, amidst all the filth! We must masters only of the dead Animals thrown into those pits by the high castes. We had to fight with cats and dogs and kites and vultures to establish our right over the carcasses, to tear off the flesh from the dead bodies. (49)

Some of the incidents are very evident to understand the burns of untouchability and patriarchal triviality. She tells that the low caste women had to maintain safe distance from high caste people while buying provisions at a store.

Standing in the courtyard, keeping distance from the shopkeeper, she would pull her pallav over her face and then, using the most Reverential and polite terms of address, she would beg him with

Utmost humility to sell her the things she wanted. ‘Appasab, could you please give this despicable Mahar woman some shikakai for One paisa and half a shell of dry coconut with black skin?’ The Shopkeeper’s children would be trickling out into the courtyard for their morning ablutions. He would give the innocent children Lessons in social behaviour, ‘Chabu, hey you, can’t you see the Dirty Mahar woman standing there? Now don’t you touch her. Keep your distance.’ Immediately our Mahar woman, gathering her rags around her tightly so as not to pollute the child, would Say, ‘Take care little master! Please keep distance. Don’t come too close. You might touch me and get polluted,’ The shopkeeper would come out and, from a distance, throw the things into her Pallav, which she had spread out in order to receive them. She would then respectfully keep her money on the threshold. That of Course did not pollute him! (14).

The caste system corrupted the mindset of the high castes. The excessive powers made them rude and forget human values. Kamble shows the invisible limits strained for the low castes by the caste system. It was not confined to personal behaviour rather the high castes were allowed to inflict physical attacks on dalits. In such cases, low caste women were the soft targets for atrocities. If some new woman fails to behave accordingly it would be a great chance for the high castes to threaten and beat the low castes. They were the masters made by the highly exploitative social structure. They would shout at the village Mahars, ‘Now! You Mahars are transgressing your limits. It is all this food that you get free of cost that has made you forget your place, isn’t it? ... Daring to pass by me without bowing! Think twice

before doing any such thing again!” (53). Mahar women have certain rules even to tuck their saris.

Mahar women had to tuck them in such a way that the borders remained hidden. Only high caste women had the privilege of wearing their saris in such a way that the borders could be seen. A Mahar woman was supposed to hide the borders under the Pleats; otherwise it was considered an offence to the high Castes. (54)

The high castes had inflicted all penalties on the low castes. They, being powerful members, created ‘difference’ in human beings in the name of caste and it was intentionally maintained by creating rules and restrictions. It is very true, as Gyanendea Pande states, that, “Difference is by definition cannot be thought or organized along a single axis. Distributed along multiple grids, it comes in innumerable forms, appearing differently in different place”. (Pande 62). In the caste based society the difference comes in the form of privilege and restrictions. The low castes were constrained at almost every level.

The Mahar women had to sell firewood for their survival in high caste lane. “Every house in this lane had a chest-high platform, like a wall, to prohibit the Mahar from directly reaching the door. The Mahar women would stand in the far off corners of the platform and call out, ‘Kaki, firewood!’” (54). The Brahmin would examine the firewood for any blood strain or strand of hair because anything belonged to or touched by Mahars was impure for the high castes. “These idiotic Mahar women! Hey you, why do you bring these brats along? They’ll the touch things and pollute everything. Tell them to sit quietly” (55) The Mahar woman had to stand far-off the platform and check the bundle scrupulously for any hair or blood stain. The Brahmin woman would give the money in an insulting manner putting coins above the hand

level. The assumptions of the idea of pollution and untouchability were so illogical and irrational. The high castes were purifying themselves with cow dung and urine. It was all irritating but Mahar women had to suffer it because of the caste catastrophe. Kamble captures the deep rooted caste bias in the high caste women and presents their heinous acts inflicted on the Mahars. She says

The Brahmin kaki, sitting in the cool shade and supervising this Operation, would keep shouting instruction after instruction, 'Listen carefully, you dumb Mahar women, check the sticks well. If you overlook any of the threads sticking to the wood, there will be a lot of trouble. But what's that to you? Your carelessness will Cost us heavily. Our house will get polluted. Then we will have to Polish the floor with cow dung and wash all our clothes, even the Rags in the house! Such trouble we'll have to undergo for you Foolishness! And how will the gods tolerate this, tell me? They too will be polluted, won't they? ... 'These idiotic Mahar women! Hey you, why do you bring these brats along? They'll touch things and pollute everything. Tell them to sit quietly'... Finally, the Kaki would throw from above, to avoid any contact, a couple of Coins on each palm. The same process was followed while selling Grass as well. The kaki would get the women to carefully check each blade of grass! (55-56)

Further, she exposes the hypocrisy in the idea of pollution. She says that the mere touch of the low castes make high castes impure then how do not the things cultivated and prepared by the low caste make them impure? She raises radical questions about the inhuman behaviour of the high castes and challenges the very notion of untouchability. She asks,

When Mahar women labour in the field, the corn gets wet with their sweat. The same corn goes to make your pure, rice dishes. And you feast on them with such evident relish! Your palaces are built with the soil soaked with the sweat and blood of Mahar. But does it rot your skin? You drink their blood and sleep comfortably on the bed of their misery. Doesn't it pollute you then? (56)

The Mahars in the villages were not less than the animals in the shade of the high castes. Rather they were worse than the animals. Kamble, by giving the subtle details of the life in the village in Maharashtra, shows that the Mahars were intentionally humiliated for the good and betterment of the high castes. They were bound in the shackles of slavery by the caste system which diversely and severely affected their lives for generations. The tragedy was that the Mahars were not acknowledged for their committed services. They were considered as untouchables and not even allowed to speak in front of the Patils. They used to do all the mean jobs for the high caste.

All lowly jobs, right from arranging fuel for cooking to making arrangements for Akka's morning ablutions, would be thrust on the Mahars. Akka was not allowed to go out to defecate after they had applied the ritualistic haldi on her, for fear of evil spirits. Instead, she would defecate in the garbage pit. And it was the Mahar who had to clean the shit. He had to sweep the house clean all the shit of a houseful of children, cut firewood and stack it neatly for cooking. All the dirty and laborious jobs were the privilege of the Mahar! (76)

Their life was fenced with obligations. The irrational notion of pollution served as a marker for their lowliness. In the name of the low castes, the high castes

executed multifaceted exploitation of the low castes. They harassed them physically and psychologically as well. The physical harassment they could bear but the psychological harassment inscribed permanent marks on their psyche which developed a sense of insecurity and inferiority in them which ultimately resulted into the loss self the loss confidence and courage of self expression.

Kamble exposes the wicked trick of making Mahars meek practiced through the idea of pollution by giving the incident of the yeskar Mahar. She writes

The yeskar had to carry with him a stick fitted at one end with a small bell. The reason for this was simple. If the men sitting down for their dinner heard the Mahar's voice, they would have to discard their meal and get up. But if they heard just the sound of his bell, they could finish their meal. His voice could pollute but not the sound of his bell".

(75)

The stick of the yeskar was the marker of his slavery but the high castes had created an illusion among the Mahars that the yaskar's stick was like a symbol of prestige. It was being considered as a marker of honour and the "wives in each Mahar family would worship it with haldi and kumkum" (77). The high castes had created a world of illusion for the dalits and it was governed on the concept of caste system. The caste system destroyed the life of the dalits. Because of the exploitative codes of caste system, the low castes Mahars were compelled to eat leftover food of the high castes and extinguish the fire of hunger. While addressing the Patils the yeskar Mahar had to bend down and say "Jee dhani, Jee dhani". (76) Yeskar Mahar had to wait at the Patil's chawdi quite away with maintaining safe distance. He had to stand with his back bent all the while and greet every high caste individual including children. He had to bend down and say "Johar mai bap" three times and then touch his head with

his palms joined in salutation. (77) This extreme level of humbleness symbolises the cultural and traditional oppression inflicted on Mahars by the caste system. Apart from doing all exhaustive work, there was no certainty of getting food. He had to carry out all errands with empty stomach. Most of the low castes were enforced to live without food, living space and clothes and Kamble tries to present the same predicament of the Mahars.

Kamble reveals every thick and thin layer of dalit's life. The lucidly elaborated account sheds adequate light on the duties and responsibilities of the Mahars. The caste system and religious scriptures had allotted all anomalous jobs like carrying away dead animals, conveying news of death, and even digging the grave. They had to pass the news of demise in the scorching sun, heavy rains, and biting cold without fail. "Very often, he would not be able to utter a single word for the fear of the relatives' wrath for having brought bad news. As if he was responsible for the death!"(79). If the upper caste family is close to the dead man, the Mahar had to carry the firewood for the last rites and wait at a safe distance till it gets over. While conveying the sad news of demise many times they had to face rage of the relatives of the dead person. They were cursed and even beaten for carrying such sad news. It shows that how insecure and vulnerable they were. The caste system had given the high castes rights and power to rule over dalits which they often used to harm dalits.

The Mahars were not safe even on the burial grounds and the major cause of it was the omnipresent caste bias. Apart from such humiliations, they had to struggle for basic needs to survive. They would get cloth piece to cover their body from cadaver and bamboo sticks to support their falling shelter from the funeral pyre. Thus, these minute dalits of subtle movements in a multiple subalternized dalit's life have become a live document of the throbbing life of the Mahars in Maharashtra. Kamble,

along with the major constraints of poverty and deprivation, throws light on the unhygienic living conditions and frequent attacks of contaminated disease the Mahars had to face. She says that the Maharwada symbolised utter poverty and total destitution. In addition to high caste people physical attacks, the Mahars were also dying of epidemics like cholera, plague and typhoid. Their ignorance and poverty could never enable them to get proper medication. As a result many of the Mahars had to succumb to death.

The Mahars had the only fate to be poor and hungry all the time. The goddess stawai has stamped hunger on their forehead and to satiate their hunger they had to get eatables from the most unlikely sources. Most of the time, they had to eat cactus pods or the flesh of dead animals. The Mahars were the victims of caste tyranny which turned hunger as their destiny. In order to extinguish fire of hunger, often, they had to eat the flesh of the dead animals. Ironically, whenever there was any epidemic, there would be food at Mahars house. They would be waiting for such outbreaks. It was the only opportunity for them to get stomach full meal. They would be delighted with such news. Baby Kamble denotes their joy. She writes

When such summons came, the joy of the Mahars knew no bounds. Everybody shouted out to share the good news with others. The Mahar men would gather in front of the chawdi and set off with knives, leaving word for their wives to hurry after them with huge baskets. All the women and children would rush there, armed with baskets and can containers... (85)

It was the misfortune of the Mahars that they had to eat dead animal's flesh. They were frantically rushing towards the death spot with just like dogs, kits and vultures and tussling with them to get enough share. This competition with dogs, kites

and vultures is synonymous with animalization of the Mahars. It shows that the caste system destroyed the humanness of the low castes and left them to live a subhuman life.

The caste system entangled the low caste and then used to throw them in the deep valley of ignorance. Due to the restrictions for socio-religious mingling and educational inabilities, they suffered from poverty, hunger and starvation. They could not understand the meaning of their life. They could not think of the reasons of their sufferings. They just obeyed the orders of the high caste. And surrender themselves to committed services of the high castes. Due to acute poverty, the problem of bread and butter acquired the central place in their life and they strived to solve this grave question for the rest of their life. They could not think of good living, respect, social acceptance and self dignity. They were living the life worse than the life of animals. Kamble witnessed this predicament of dalit and understood the cause of their sufferings. Baby Kamble denotes the pathetic condition of the low caste and directly attacks on the caste system and high caste for the treacherous conditions of the dalits. She says

Such was the condition of our people. We were just like animals, but without tails. We could be called human only because we had two legs instead of four. Otherwise there was no difference between us and the animals, But how had we been reduced to this bestial state? Who was responsible? Who else, but people of high caste! They destroyed our reasoning. Our ability to think. We were reduced a condition far worse than of the bullocks kept in the courtyard of the high castes. (49)

The caste system and inhuman practices in Hindu religion had ruined the life of dalit women. It is very obvious that the triviality of the caste tyranny was supported

and implemented through Hindu religious scriptures and helped to legitimize the causeless victimization of the low castes. The low castes remained faithful to Hinduism for a long time but it always remained unjust and unfair to them. Therefore, Baby Kamble directly attacks on Hindu religion and registers her anger. She says

What a beastly thing this Hindu religion is! Let me tell you, it's not prosperity and wealth that you enjoy- it is the very life blood of the Mahars!... Just as the farmer pierces his bullock's nose and inserts the string through the nostrils to control it, you have pierced the Mahar nose with the string of ignorance. And you have been flogging us with the whip of pollution. This is all that your selfish religion has given to us. (56)

Kamble has exposed the hypocritical mental makeup of the upper caste sections of Indian society. Since the marginalization, victimization and enslavement of Dalits is based on this thinking that the Dalits are dirty and contaminated. They are treated as untouchables but such mentality is kept away whenever it comes to the benefit of those upper caste sections. In all indirect forms the upper caste Hindus are dependent on the Dalits. Kamble masterfully exposes these double standards of upper caste people like this:

A Brahmin priest would be invited to solemnise the marriage. He would stand at a distance for fear of pollution, but he would never make any compromise on his dakshina! That he took away without any fear of pollution. Apart from the dakshina money, he was also required to be given about two kilos of channa dal, one-and-a-half kilos of rice, three kilos of wheat and huge plateful of jiggery. (89)

The high caste played with the lives of the low castes and it was all for no fault on their parts. The shroud high caste Hindus had created such a mechanism that the low castes would automatically get grinded for no reason. The low castes were never accepted as human beings. The heart stunning humiliation of the dalits was executed when dalits had never disobeyed the high castes. Baby Kamble raises voice against the unreasonable exploitation of the dalits for no reason. She asks the question to the high caste people that why did they subjugate the poor and docile low castes. Through the following questions she challenges the validity of the discriminatory social order. She asks

We were the people who lived in your house, yet we dared not drink even a drip of water there. We never dared to cross your path. We dedicated ourselves to the service of the civilization and culture that was so precious to you, in spite of the fact that it was always unkind and unjust to us. Why we would ever spread out our hands like spittoons for you if you want to spit! Then why did you treat us with so much contempt? (38).

Kamble has revealed the worthlessness of Hindu religion and the tricks in the caste system she has asserted the need of realization of the self and the society around. She became aware of surrounding because of Dr. Ambedkar and hence her long muted voice began boldly to express the innumerable miseries of dalit. Kamble openly asserts the need of rejecting the religion which has licked them in the mire of ignorance and articulates significance to shift from the state of animal to the rank of the humans with Dr. Ambedkar. She says

This is all that your selfish religion has given to us. But now we have learned how utterly worthless your religion is. And the one who has

taught us this, the one who has transformed from beasts into human beings, is the architect of our constitution-that shining jewel of sheel and satva, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. (56)

CHAPTER THREE

GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Women never had an independent identity of their own. They are considered as a dependent and suppressed being. Women are forced to live restricted life to maintain the prestige of family and society. According to Kamble, in her Maharwada it was the custom to keep women at home. The honour enjoyed by the family was based on the restriction imposed on the women of the house. Her mother was not an exception. Her father had locked up her mother in the house like a bird in the cage. When no one could see even the nail of the women thus locked up her mother in the house like a bird in the cage. When no one could see even the nail of the women thus locked up within the four walls of the house, then this honour becomes the talk of the Maharwada. She writes

In those days, it was the custom to keep women at home, behind the threshold. The honour enjoyed by the family was in proportion to the restrictions imposed on the women of the house. When no one could see even a nail of the women thus confined within the four walls of the house, then this 'honour' became the talk of the town- a byword among the relatives and friends in the surrounding villages. (5)

It shows that the women were treated like personal property of the husband and they were locked up in the house like birds in a cage. A father's honour is judged by his son-in law's prestige. It was a common topic in her Maharwada when people

gather at a place for exchange of views. Someone would say, “Yesterday, I had gone to leave my daughter at her in-laws’ place. She really is most lucky, you know, to get into such a house. What a prestigious house” (9). They had nothing to do with the life of the daughter the only thing they considered about was the honour and prestige. Women all over the country endure unequal treatment is true in all classes and castes. If the higher caste women themselves are the subject to gender oppression, women from lower caste are doubly suppressed, both for being women and for being lower caste women.

A woman’s place was considered to be behind the threshold of the house. Marriage acted as an institution to restrict the boundaries for a woman. Right from her birth, she is under the rule of someone or the other. As a child, as a woman spends her life under the guardianship of her parents and at last her son. Marriage “inexorably locks her into a social system which denies her autonomy”(Barry 136) .Society has categorized men and women with certain characteristics. But this categorization is more psychological. ‘Gender’ is socially constructed ideas about the behaviour and role a particular ‘sex’ performs. In this categorization men are considered as bold, strong, assertive, independent, aspiring, rational and logical. Women on contrary, considered to be timid, yielding, gentle, dependent, self-sacrificing, emotional, intuitive. Though women qualities are appreciated and they are worshiped for being great but on the contrary women are exploited and humiliated because of these great qualities.

Universally women are subjugated in patriarchal social order. They have been the helpless victims of the domination of a particular gender unnecessarily even when nature has given equal status to both male and female. Dalit women are treated by the Indian society as the lowest of the low. They are not only persecuted by the society

but they are also dominated by their own community. This subjugation of women, just like dalit, is the result that the men are considering powerful and socio-economic rights are given mainly to men. Patriarchy offered all rights and power to men and left women to be subordinate. Like high caste people, all men in general, subjugated women by restricting them to do certain things. Women were denied freedom and independent existence. The dominant men created separate rules for women by forming sacred scriptures and religious practices. As a result of this, women could hardly get any opportunity to understand their true self. They could not get any chance to live free life like men or to have their equal status in the society. They were not defined by themselves but by those who were in power that is Men. This wicked trick of patriarchy has been rightly pointed out by Simone de Beauvoir. She states “Humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him. She is not regarded as an autonomous being. Man is the subject, he is the absolute. She is the other. He sets himself up as essential as opposed to the other, the inessential, the object”. (Beauvoir 16)

Dalits are the people who are considered impure, dirty and untouchable as they belong to the lowest rank in Hindu hierarchical system, and are excluded from the Hindu society. They were termed as untouchables and dirty by the sacred Hindu Vedas and were subjected to the meanest jobs such as sweeping, husbandry and scavenging. K.D.Purane says “Untouchability means pollution by the touch of person born in a particular caste or family. It is generally seen that this practice of untouchability is peculiar to Hindu society” (23). Women, who already have a secondary status in society, face a double pressure as they belong to a Dalit community. They are subjugated in and outside the home. They never enjoy honor and dignity which should be due to them; rather they are the soft targets of all the

forms of discrimination in Indian society. Kamble has gone deep into her memory and brings to the surface the plight of Dalit women. Her autobiography is filled with heart wrenching passages of miseries and sufferings of women who are made to receive the inhuman treatment without any fault of their own. There is hardly any place where women could feel secure and have a sigh of relief. Their lives are made hell at every stage and every place is no less than a torture center for them. They are made to suffer in every form whether it is physical, economic, social and psychological.

As for men, their work ends when they have finished in the fields. If you are born in this world, it is best you were born a man. Born as women, what good do we get? (Bama 7)

Women face discrimination right from her birth. A girl child is soon left on her own, whereas a boy is served food first, treated well and cared for because it is believed that it is he who would provide his parents food, clothing and support them in their old age while a girl has to leave her paternal home. The cocktail of gender and caste created serious and even bigger barriers to tear them down. This predicament of dalits is general and dalit women in particular has been pertinently outlined by Smeeta Patil in her path making article on dalit women in Maharashtra. She writes

Dalits are oppressed, exploited and discriminated against, and are being methodically erased through graded inequality at every level. So there is hardly any space for dalit women in either the public or private sphere. Subjugation of dalit women persists through the obnoxious linkages of caste, gender and class. (Patil 11-12)

Kamble presents an unflinching portrait of Dalit women, subjugated triply by gender, caste and patriarchy. "If the Mahar community is the 'other' for the Brahmins, Mahar women become the 'other' for the Mahar men." (Kamble XI).

Especially newly married younger women suffer the worst fate. Girls are usually married off at the early age of eight or nine marriage for them turns out to be nothing but a big calamity. The first duty of the newly wedded daughter-in-law was to prepare bhakris so that she could prove her culinary skills. She had to do all the household chores without being given the chance of making any complaints. They can never expect a compliment in return from their in-laws but if a girl could not do the household duties, she was abused by her in-laws especially if she failed to make bhakris, her mother-in-law would yell like this:

Then the sasu would call all her friends and neighbors and hold an open exhibition of the tiny bhakris, 'Attyabai, come and see what's happening here. Didn't you think that I'd brought the daughter of a good woman into my house? Look at the bhakris this slut has prepared. She cannot even make a few bhakris properly. (94)

When a ritual was to be observed, the work of the women got doubled. They had to plaster their house with cow dung, and clean the utensils and the clothes. They lead a very pathetic life in their husband's home. Kamble skillfully depicts how a daughter-in-law is not safe even before a woman of her own community but are always the target of insults and humiliations and is frequently physically and psychologically tortured in her in-laws. Their mothers-in-law loved to give the same harsh treatment to them as they had received from their own in-laws. They would even curse their mother if they fail to do a task. This is shown by the book in these lines:

What's your aai really? Tell me! Is she a good married woman at all?
Or does she know only how to run after the pot-maker donkeys? I

pamper you... my own sasur was spitfire. A burning coal! Holding a burning coal in one's palm was easier than living with her! (95).

The young daughter-in-law was a kind of slave for the Mahar family. It was the fates of the Mahar women to endure the child marriage as soon as they reach at maturity and further endure beating and torture for the rest of the life. The constant hard work would make their bodies strong but they were always weak at heart. They always longed for love, affection, care and concern. The emotional longing of low caste women could neither be understood by high caste women nor by the low caste men. Kamble gives a dalit feminist critique of patriarchy, an exploitative structure, and compare it with another equally devastating institution of human exploitation- Chaturvarna system. "Just as the Chaturvarna system created castes and sanctioned discriminatory practices, the cunning creator of the world established the practice of making women dependent on men. Men have therefore dominated women ever since". (102)

The condition of the Mahar women was wretched, worthless and most miserable. They had to do all the house hold duties, and go for selling wood to earn for their daily bread. They collected all the left-over from Maratha households by cleaning their animal pens to give them to their children. Every women of Mahar sang an inspirational song that their future would be bright enough while grinding stone. Her children were left alone soon as she needed to earn for her family. Most of the time women had to go on hunger unendingly. Dalit men never bothered to provide nutritious and hygienic food to the new mothers. Women had to be forcibly eat the gruel made from jowar. At the time of their delivery the midwives performed their jobs without any professional skill. Whenever they needed any sort of assistance they were left to the mercy of god. Kamble paints the painful and pathetic condition of

new mothers' as "Many new mothers had to hungry. They would lie down, pining for a few morsels while hunger gnawed their insides. Mostly women suffered this fate."

(60)

Abusing daughter-in-law is very common in Dalit families. Controlling women is no exceptional in Dalit Families. Masculinity is associated with the patriarchal power. "Keep her under your thumb, otherwise you will be disgraced in public" (96). Those were the most common expressions in Dalit families. For Dalit families, Dalit women were the easy victims available to take their frustration. Father-in-law, brother-in-law, mother-in-law and husband, anybody can do anything with the daughter-in-law. Girls who are tortured have no place to runaway. A few girls would runaway from the in-laws' house. There is no right to divorce the oppressive husband in Dalit societies. Second marriage is not a question at all in their lives. In fact the women who are thrown out the in-laws' houses are considered to be bad omen and they find no shelter anywhere else. Mahar women who run away from the husband's house are considered to be sexually immoral and the only remedy is to get rid of them. She would whisper into his ears;

Dhondya, what good is such a runaway wife to you? Some bastards must have made her leave you. She must be having an affair. You are her husband, but obviously the bitch prefers someone else. This bitch will bring nothing but disgrace to us. She wants to ruin your life. Don't let her off so easily.(99).

Dalit women writers have stood against the celebration of Dalit culture. They have described more about the rituals, superstitions beliefs and enslavement of women as the qualities prevalent in Dalit families for the reason that untouchable castes are also part of the caste system. Kamble describes many atrocities committed

against Dalit women. These atrocities are no different from the Brahminical way of humiliating Dalits:

These both father and son would make a plan for chopping off girl's nose. The son would keep ready a razor sharpened to an edge. At night, he would sit on her cheat and taking his own time, cut off her nose. Then they would drive the poor girl out of the house, with blood pouring out from mutilation. (101).

Kamble says that the Mahar women lives were limited to and bound by all domestic chores and they never had the provision of self-hygiene and self-care. Besides they were considered just as child procreating machines. They were the worst victims of patriarchy, caste consciousness, gender bias and domestic violence. Kamble describe the pathetic situation of the Mahar women who are supposed to behave like slaves in presence of their upper caste Brahmins. They are even instructed by their own men as to how to be respectful to the upper caste Hindus and take them as their masters. A sense of threat was instilled in them with regard to these upper caste sections of the community. But for their hardships and laborious work for their masters, they earned curses and abuses as their payments. Generations after generations, the Mahars served their masters very obediently. However the upper caste community threw abuses at the Mahars, if they did not fall at the feet of their masters, or if they did not give the way to their masters when the masters came across in their way.

They had to cover themselves fully if they saw any man from the higher casts coming down the road, when he came close, they had to say 'the humble Mahar women fall at your feet master'. This was like a chant,

which they had to repeat innumerable times, even to a small child if it belonged to a higher caste. (52)

Kamble further narrates the differences they had between them and high caste women regarding clothing and accessories. Dalit women were restricted even to copy and use the things in same manner. Only high caste women had the privilege of wearing their saris in such a manner that the border could be seen and a Mahar woman was supposed to hide the borders otherwise it was considered an offence to the high castes women. High caste women though become prey of their male folk. But they don't support women who belong to low position, even having the same experiences. It is perhaps because of the unequal distribution of power. High caste men keep command over each section whether it's low caste people or their own women. In this chain of command and domination high caste women keep command over low caste people and further low caste men control their women. Thus the social conditions of these women are worst.

There is duality towards the treatment women are given in their patriarchal society. They are worshipped and considered to be pious and benevolent but contrary as destroyer and malevolent. Women become the center of all evil and supernatural elements. All the superstitious activities hover around women that can be interpreted psychologically. Kamble, in her autobiography depicts such incident that often took place in her community in the month of 'Aakhaadh'. It was the month in which the godmen displayed all the tricks and skills of their trade. Women were the forefront of these celebrations. They used to wear clean and fresh saris after their ritual baths, and visit several places, conversation focused on ritual baths and possession by spirits. This was a month in which almost every second women became possessed. The whole act is described by Kamble where all the member of the family and community

would participate in this performance and then the possessed woman would slowly come to her sense. Recognizing the presence of the elder men and women in the crowd, she would curse herself and then try to keep her hair in place and cover her forehead. Other women narrates stories about the force of the spirit that had possessed her. She is treated like a goddess and worshipped, people got scared. She receives respect and attention which she can never get at being herself.

Dalit women shown in this text is sandwiched between the Brahmanic and Dalit patriarchy as they are doubly oppressed. Dalit community members were influenced by the joys of enslaving others enjoyed by the upper caste people and wanted to imitate their harsh nature but they had no one to show their dominance. Thus they began to enslave the weaker sex in the form of their own daughters-in-law. They would treat the daughter-in-law like slaves because “she was not a human being for her in-laws but just another piece of wood”. (99) Like High caste Hindus, Mahars wanted to become masters so they put their daughters-in-law as their slaves. Kamble provides the painful commentary on the plight of these women like this:

The other world had bound us with chains of slavery. But we too were human beings. And we too desired to dominate, to wield power. But who would let us do that? So we made our own arrangements to find slaves- our very own daughter-in-laws! (87)

Though the text explores how the Brahmanic domination had turned the Mahars as worst as animals. Kamble secures a path for the liberty of Dalit women through the ideology of Ambedkar. In the book the author talks about the influence of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who was the light of their life. He asked the Mahars to educate their children, and inspired them to fight against the atrocities. He asked them not to give offerings to the gods who never cared about them and asked them not to eat the

dead animals. Kamble has given due credit to the transformative thoughts of Ambedkar which helped the Dalits in elevating their social and economic position. His ideas are put thus “From now onwards you have to follow a different path. You must educate your children. Divorce your children from god. Teach them good things. Send them to schools. The result will be there for you to see”. (64)

Kamble draws attention towards the complexities of caste and gender bias which characterise the position of women in Indian society. Indian women have been caught into the shackles of rituals and symbols. The patriarchal social order has codified women with ornamental signs of male possession, marriage, widowhood etc. And it was enforced to follow the codes at any cost. In Indian context the Kumkum is considered as a sign of a living husband and it is customary for women to put Kumkum and wear Mangalsutra. The male oriented society has given excessive significance to such symbols and given religio-cultural meanings to them. It was imposed on women to follow the code of conduct and to be decent and to maintain the decency the women were required to bear all sufferings meekly. Kamble criticises this very nature of patriarchy and ironically presents Indian women’s sentiments towards Kumkum. She writes

We are so protective about the kumkum on our foreheads. We believe that if a woman has her husband she has the whole world; if she does not have a husband, then the world holds nothing for her. It is more precious than even the Kohinoor diamond. (41)

Right to divorce does not seem to be a common practice among Dalit families as described in *Prison We Broke*. Though Dalit women are not completely economically dependent on Dalit men, they are socially bound to the concept of marriage. Bama writes that the family and marriage are not everything in the lives of

Dalit women who struggle for everybody survival. They struggle for food and there not much economic support for their men in the families. Dalit women have their deliveries at home and many of them die due to lack of proper diet but they are not left with option of going to hospital due to poverty. Due to this poverty and struggle for everyday survival, there is not much scope for Dalit women to observe the visible practices of married women as in case of upper-caste women who follow all the rituals of marriage even in their day to day life. This does not imply Dalit women have more freedom when compared to upper-caste women:

If a man dies, there is no rule that says his wife must immediately go into white saris nor that she must behave in such and such manner. She will carry on in her usual way. And where does she have the time to smear herself with turmeric, have a bath, and dress herself up with bottu and flowers? She runs to work at dawn and comes home after sunset. So whether her husband is alive or dead, she will follow the same routine. (Bama 90).

As Bama describes, symbols of marriage like padapuja, kumkum, flowers and ornaments plays very less important role in Dalit women lives due to their poor conditions of life. Dalit communities are perceived to be free from patriarchal violence by critics such as Gabriele Dietrich and Kanche Ilaiah due to absence of visible practices of patriarchy like performing rituals of married woman such padapuja, observance rules of widowhood and so on.

Kamble's autobiography is not completely an account of her own self. She kept her own life out of her autobiography she has depicted the sufferings of women under patriarchal domination as well women's gradual consciousness against injustice. Just as the Varna system created caste and sanctioned discriminatory practices,

patriarchy established the practice of making women dependent on men. Men have therefore dominated women ever since. Her autobiography very minutely observes the cause of women's plight. It is women's dependency and illiteracy that drags them into such miserable lives. Once a woman gets married she becomes responsibility to her in-laws. Women never have their own identity. It is believed that if a woman has her husband she has the whole world, if she does not have a husband then the world holds nothing for her. Through her autobiography Kamble denies such belief. Thus she has written her autobiography not only to get an identity but to let the world come to know of the painful experiences women undergo because of gender politics as well as it encourage women to fight against patriarchal norms to build their own identity.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN EXPRESSION OF CHANGE

Kamble's *Jina Amucha* is a life story of a woman who was directly involved in Ambedkar's movement. Her autobiography is not merely a life story of an individual but of the Mahar community of Maharashtra. It traces the history of Mahar struggle and asserts its specific identity from pre-independent time to present. The author narrates the inhuman condition of Dalits to which they were enforced to live. She brings out the potential women played in Dr. Ambedkar's movement as well as in the transformation of their community and its identity. Besides, *Jina Amucha* is considered to be the first Dalit women's autobiography which has created many dimensions to think about normative issues like dignity, self-respect and also focuses on the much debated contemporary issues of tradition, modernity, gender struggles and identity issues in India. Born in 1929, in Veergaon, in Pune district of Maharashtra, Kamble is one of the women activists of Dr. Ambedkar's movement. Kamble's activist life is very central to her Mahar identity and generally to all the autobiographies written by Mahars.

Kamble narrates a journey from the past lives of 'Mahar' to the present Buddhist Dalits. Her description of poverty-stricken lives of the Mahar does not

reduce to pity rather she tells it with a sense of honor, for instance Dalit women referring to their huts as a palace, which they would polish with cow dung. While putting their past life under critical scrutiny, the writer criticizes the philosophy of Hinduism. She challenges the devaluation of their labor and servility by pointing out the productivity and utility of their work. The narrative style of Kamble challenges the bourgeois genre of autobiography by replacing 'I to We'. The self in this autobiography is both individual and collective. This self acquires larger meaning only in the context of narrative of the community because it represents a promising future for the individual and community. However, Dalit autobiography cannot be accused of bringing an undesired past into the present for they are most direct and accessible way in which silence and misrepresentation of Dalits has been countered, for instance, Dr. Ambedkar's decision of conversion to Buddhism is misinterpreted as political move and an individual decision. Kamble's autobiography shows that it was a collective decision.

For Dalit movement, past also offers a stepping stone to articulate a new future. Dalits cannot dismiss their past as paltry thing. The past ought to be owned objectively and reassessed for an alternative history to be chalked out ahead. The historical writings of Ambedkar introduced a new narrative of Indian history as Buddhism against Brahmanism. Both of them traced the plight of the lower castes and women in the history and at the same time, it retrieved the subjectivity of Dalits. It created the identity of Dalits not as the untouchable but of fighters. This legacy is carried forward by Kamble through her autobiography as a critical construction of Dalit history. One has to link up the present struggle with the fight of the past especially when the past has been misrepresented and simply forgotten. The autobiography of Kamble summons the truth from the past truth about the poverty and

helplessness of Dalits in pre-Ambedkarite as also the resistance and struggle of Dalit movement. The writer describes the past life of the Mahar but the trust of her narration is on the struggle of Dalit movement and the dynamic personality of Dr. Ambedkar who brought dignity to their lives and this is one of the remarkable aspects of her autobiography.

The above mentioned general themes of Kamble's autobiography form the base for a closer analysis of her autobiography and focus more specifically on the question of identity as Mahar and Dalit. Mahar identity has been constructed and supposed to be a Dalit identity, but the internal conflicts within the communities problematize the representation of a unified Dalit identity. Kamble maintains her community's identity intact but also focuses on the lineage and the internal conflicts within the community. She writes that, there are three groups' within the community, such as 'Modern Mahar', 'Traditional Mahar', and Yeskar Mahar. All these three sub-castes of Mahars have differences among each other. Kamble narrates the incidence from her childhood where there is a debate between the two Mahars. The debate is about the intervention of Ambedkar in the cultural/inner matters that have built up around the religious practices of Mahars. The traditional Mahar seeks to resist any attempt of intervention in this cultural or religious domain. The modernist Malhari, from Mumbai, attempts to force the dialogue on tradition, and is vehemently opposed by the conservative Mahar who tries to protect the cultural inner.

Another example of this growing tension between traditional Mahar and modern/reformist Mahar is quite visible when the two had a conversation on the religious sanctity of the Murali custom in the Mahar community. Kamble describes, the custom of offering a girl child to the gods was rampant, and they were called

Murali. It is surprising to note that, though dedicating girls to a temple was also in custom in south India, known as Devdasi system, there was a vast difference between the conditions of these two community girls. “In south India, Devdasi belonged to a particular non-Brahmin caste but not untouchable castes. So, for them, there was some economic arrangement for the girl’s survival and the girl could exert her power to some extent due to her high ritual status”. On the contrary, Murali mostly took to prostitution for her survival and served clients. As the writer in her autobiography narrates, when Dr. Ambedkar appealed to the untouchables to do away with the customs of dedicating their children to a deity, there was a tension between the conservative Mahar and the reformist Mahar, Kamble’s grandfather Malhari, who served as a butler to an Army officer, constantly argued and debated with his people to give up this custom. The conservative Mahar sought to defend the custom by elevating its spirituality. They would argue that the marriage of Dalit women with god Khandoba is a rare privilege, while the reformist Mahan would argue that this elevation is reduction of the human being to the worst form of exploitation.

Narrating the specific experiences of Mahars, the writer describes that the whole community survived on the stolen bread given to them as remuneration for their service. Unlike, other castes, the Mahars had no caste specific occupation and their job was to assist the Patil, the headman of the village in both public and private tasks, carrying message across villages, and assist him in receiving official visitors. They were responsible for the disposal of dead cattle, public notification of deaths, cleaning funeral pyres etc. though the Mahars were government servants, their remuneration was not paid by the government but by the villagers; it was called ‘Watan’. While performing their job, the Mahar had to carry the folded blanket on their shoulder and a stick with a bell which they respected a lot and took pride in carrying it. This pride

was an illusion, which the high castes had created in their minds. Though the Mahars took pride in the 'Watan system' and considered it as their honor, this bubble burst once they reached Patil's office, the headman of the village. They had to stand bending their back for the whole day in utter supplication and salute every Hindu who passed from that office. Since, the Mahar community survived on the left over food of the Hindus, they never thought of raising their voice against their humiliation. The Karbhari, headman of the Mahar argues with the grandfather of the writer that "they are born for this work, it is their sacred duty".

Kamble, forcing on the present day educated Mahars, becomes quite harsh and criticizes the tendency of educated Mahars towards the community welfare. She argues that Dalits have made a progress in education and many of them are in government jobs, living comfortable life in urban areas but majority of Dalits still live in villages or city slums. Increasing number of atrocities against Dalits proves the strong hold of caste system on Indian society. Dr. Ambedkar's movement succeeded in giving human rights to Dalits. The rights of Dalits are protected in our constitution but the claim of Dalits to equality has been challenged now and then. Due to lack of unity among Dalits, the problems of Dalit masses are being neglected. The writer points out the detachment of educated Dalits from the masses.

Self-criticism is one of the significant aspects of Dalit writing. It is always easy to protest against our enemy but the difficult thing to protest against ourselves. As an activist woman writer, she attacks the sense of inferiority and superiority complex among Dalits. In the beginning of the autobiography, the writer brings out the inferiority complex of Dalits, which shackled them to slavery, and the great achievement of Dr. Ambedkar in breaking it. At the end of her autobiography, the

writer criticizes the superiority complex of the educated Dalits. Kamble observes that some white collared Dalits with government jobs presume themselves to be superior to their fellow beings. Such Dalits in order to be accepted by the high caste people imitate their cultural life this is what M. N. Srinivas, a sociologist calls, the process of sanskritization.

The Hindu society is a stratified one in which there are innumerable small caste groups each of which tries to pass for a higher position in caste hierarchy. The best way of staking a claim to a higher position is to adopt the custom and ways of a higher caste. This process is called sanskritization. The low castes were prohibited from following the customs and rites of high castes since these customs and rites are considered as markers of their being high castes. “The sanskritization of customs of the lower castes have happened due to economic betterment, the acquisition of political power and the desire to move up in the hierarchy”.

She laments on the pitiable condition of Mahars and writes that even after the historic conversion of the Mahars to Buddhism in 1956; the Dalits of Maharashtra are following up the cultural life of high castes. They have forgotten their own past which they considered as not worthy of owning. They turn their back to their fellows in a village that brings embarrassment to them due to their poverty and ignorance. The writer reminds such Dalits that the comfort of life they are enjoying today is the fruit of Dalit struggle. The process of sanskritization demands an isolation of a person from his fellows since they are not of superior status one aspires to achieve. The sanskritization of Dalits means the futility of struggle lead by Dalits. In his speeches, Dr. Ambedkar stressed that the future progress of Dalit community depend on the educated generation of Dalits. While explaining the importance of education to Dalits,

Dr. Ambedkar said that the educated generation of Dalit would transform our society by addressing the problem of Dalit masses.

The writer observes, the detachment of educated Dalits from the masses; their indifferent attitude towards the problems of Dalits saddens her and compels her to remind them that it was the sacrifice of Dr. Ambedkar that enabled them to enjoy comforts of life. Her autobiography is not a mere account of memories of past life; she pays attention to the present problems of Dalits. For her, life does not mean mere wealth and comfort, because it destroys the sense of duty. The writer lives her life by this principle that is why she argues all, to help the poor people in whatever way they can. Sanskritization obscures the realization that all social divisions were part of the same engine of social oppression. It requires an acceptance of the basic hierarchical premises of the caste system. It means that some educated Dalits are being co-opted in the same system by which they were victimized in the past. The writer reminds them of conversion to Buddhism in her words, 'the path of truth and righteousness' that Dr. Ambedkar showed them.

All the above descriptions of a Mahar community narrate the specific experiences of the Mahar identity. The term Dalit used by the autobiographer is basically to refer to Mahars. These experiences have been generalized in the making of Dalit identity. The Mahar community has been represented as Dalit identity but the experiences narrated in the text are exclusively Mahars. In the earlier days of Dalit struggle led by Dr. Ambedkar, the Mahar community was the first prime mover of social, cultural, religious and political upheavals in Maharashtra, who rebelled against the caste based oppression and exploitation done by the upper-caste Hindus. Mahar was an untouchable caste and assumed to be a Dalit. It was Ambedkar's historic

movement when Mahar was thought to be Dalit and therefore, inclusive of all untouchable castes. But does that feature reflect in Kamble's text is the question.

On the one hand, Kamble's text can be read as speaking for unified Dalit identity that subsumes the differences among the Mahar community but in it writer avoids the discussion on caste hierarchy in Dalit community of Maharashtra. In Maharashtra, Mang, Dhor, Chambhar, Nomadic Tribes and Mahar constitute Dalit community. In her narration, we do not come across the Mahar community's relation with other Dalit communities, their relation with the Ambedkarite movement. Thus, it tends to be exclusively the history of Mahar community; this can be read as a critique of her autobiography. On the other hand, her autobiography also focuses on the tensions within Dalit identity, if not on the local level but in the larger framework of Dalit communities.

Kamble's autobiography has descriptions of caste violence in various forms. For her the very rituals of Hinduism such as Dalits taking part in consumption of liquor, sacrificing the animals and finally left with the only option to beg food from caste Hindus was the constant violence under which Mahars live. The basic human dignity is denied to Dalits. In spite all this they were made to believe that the only way to keep people of the community alive is to participate in such rituals (14). There is a certain progress in the political understanding of Mahars which is very visible in her lifespan under the influence of Ambedkarite Dalit movement. Mahars were influenced by Ambedkar's philosophy and accepted Buddhism. They have become part of Dalit movement and rigorously questioned the upper-caste dominance in many ways. In the context of Ambedkarite struggle, the educated youth who are working for the movement received a telegram from Ambedkar to protest against the visible caste

symbols by seeking entry into the temples and hotels. Educated Mahar youth somehow managed to enter the temple and touch the idol. This made Brahmins very upset and they chased them with lathis. Of course Dalit boys escaped this violence. But the priests have announced that Dalits have polluted idol and the temple, due to which God is very upset. Only after the constant worship and ritual purification for one and a half month they claimed to restore the purity of the temple.

Dalits collectively face such violence in the society from upper-castes when they become assertive. Here, Dalits have not only subverted the norms of caste system which made them untouchables they have also subverted the power of Brahmins over the religion. Brahmins have monopolized the religion that when a Brahmin announces that the idol is defiled, every other caste including lower-castes believed and wanted to work towards publication. Dalits attempting to enter temples is not to take part in Hinduism but to server the caste system. Even the ignorant attempt of an untouchable would have made upper-castes rage against him/her and lead to caste violence. Subversive practices of Dalits and stepping out of caste position through education, self-respect and economic prosperity would directly refute the power of upper-caste which would lead to their animosity towards Dalits.

Kamble's autobiography turns into the discussion on Dalit patriarchy from the constant violent struggle of all Dalits for survival in caste prejudiced society. She is not ready to celebrate Dalit culture, since it is full of superstitions; rituals imposed by upper-castes and imposed food habits of eating dead animals. It is something that needs to be rebelled against. Similarly she would point out the violence within the families of Mahars against their women. Apart from the poverty stricken life,

superstitious beliefs, lack of medical care at the time of deliveries, she has to endure severe physical violence by husband and in-laws (104).

Abusing daughter-in-law is very common in Dalit families. Controlling women is not exceptional in Dalit families. Masculinity is associated with the patriarchal power. "Keep her under your thumb, otherwise you will be disgraced in public" (96). Those were the most common expressions in Dalit families. For Dalit families, Dalit women were the easy victims available to take their frustration. Father-in-law, brother-in-law, mother-in-law and husband, anybody can do anything with the daughter-in-law. Girls who are tortured have no place to runaway. A few girls would runaway from the in-laws' house to natal house are disgraced by father and brother and beaten up by them and will be sent back to the in-laws' house. There is no right to divorce the oppressive husband in Dalit societies.

Second marriage is not a question at all in their lives. In fact the women who were mutilated or thrown out the in-laws' houses are considered to be bad omen and they find no shelter anywhere else (103). Thus Kamble writes that the assumption that Hindu Code bill is more helpful for upper-caste women is not entirely true. It is important for Dalit women also who are not educated and well aware their rights are not able access such rights even today. Among many upper-castes, child marriage was a common practice. Child marriage is violence against the childhood of girls which confine them to patriarchal oppression forever in life. Kamble writes that Mahar women who run away from the husband's house are perceived to be sexually immoral and the only remedy is to get rid of them. She would whisper into his ears:

Dhondya, what good is such a runaway wife to you? Some bastard must have made her leave you. She must be having an affair. You are her

husband, but obviously the bitch prefers someone else. I suspect that this somebody is from our own community. This bitch will bring nothing but disgrace to us. No, no! I don't want such a slut in my house. She wants to ruin your life. Don't let her off so easily. Dhondya, cut off the tip of her nose; only then will my mother's heart breathe easy! Don't bring shame on your father's name (Kamble 100).

Such atrocities of mutilating, killing Dalit women were very common incidents as described by and sexual morality is not present in Dalit communities which perpetrated atrocities on Dalit women. The imitation of upper-caste culture also could have been one reason behind child marriages in Dalit communities. The formation of caste did not happen suddenly. Castes and communities do undergo lot of influences and changes with the passage of time.

The belief that Dalit women are treated as slaves in the families is not very extensively examined idea in Dalit movement or Dalit male writing. One reason could be that Dalit male writers would want to celebrate Dalit culture in order to bring self-respect for Dalits. I believe what is important for Dalit politics is to bring self-respect for the individual Dalits but not to the caste because Dalit is the category that fights against the caste and advocates the caste free society. The category Dalit needs not celebrate any of untouchable caste's culture which is only an imposed culture by the caste system. Whether there is more equality or not, castes in their basic form are oppressive and individuals have not formed its norms to make it more liberal. The quality of every caste is decided by the caste system in larger framework. Hence, it is not helpful or necessary to celebrate caste culture.

It is the category Dalit that struggles to establish a new society where there is social justice, equal opportunity for all irrespective of caste. Dalit women writers have stood against the celebration of Dalit culture. They have described more about the rituals, superstitious beliefs and enslavement of women as the qualities prevalent in Dalit families for the reason that untouchable castes are also part of the caste system. Kamble describes many atrocities committed against Dalit women. These atrocities are no different from the Brahminical way of humiliating Dalits:

The both father and son would make a plan for chopping off the girl's nose. The sasra would go to her mother's place and with sweet words, bring her back. Meanwhile, the son would keep ready a razor sharpened to an edge. At night, he would sit on her chest and taking his own time, cut off her nose. Then they would drive the poor girl out of the house, with blood pouring out from mutilation (Kamble 101).

The atrocities such as Sati and restrictions on the mobility of upper-caste women in the public which are more visible forms of violence gain more attention than the atrocities that are committed in Dalit families. Dalit women writing brings out such atrocities committed on Dalit women which were less visible due to the lack of Dalit women's representation in education and politics. Kamble also describes the incident in which another Dalit woman who was axed down being enticed by her husband into the forest for the reason of smiling at his cousin once. Masculinity is shaped in Dalit families also by the strength of dominating women in the family and community. Just as how caste system keeps each caste either superior or inferior to another caste, gender dynamics continue to exist in all the castes. Dalit men who lack the power within the society would dominate Dalit women who are next in order. The

need for Dalit women's political organizations is stressed in the Dalit women's autobiographies.

Right to divorce not seem to be a common practice among Dalit families as described in *Prisons We Broke*. Though Dalit women are not completely economically dependent on Dalit men, they are socially bound to the concept of marriage. They struggle for food and there not much economic support from their men in the families. Dalit women have their deliveries at home and many of them die due to lack of proper diet but they are not left with the option of going to hospital due to poverty. Due to this poverty and struggle for everyday survival, there is not much scope for Dalit women to observed the visible practices of married women as in case of upper-caste women who follow all the rituals of marriage even in their day to day life.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

The Prison We Broke gives a picture of the Mahars in Maharashtra. Kamble depicts every aspects of Mahars life right from birth to death. *The Prison We Broke* is the expression of protest against caste and patriarchal stratification of people at times tends to expose the exploitative structure of Hindu hegemony. Kamble describes the physical and psychological atrocities inflicted on Mahar women in public and domestic spheres.

Kamble's autobiography cannot be confined to a particular notion of thought. It is a multidimensional text which explores entirely un-viewed sides of diversely subalternized dalit men and women's lives. It presents the historical overview of the multifaceted exploitation of the low caste. Janhavi Acharekar notes the multiple implications of the autobiography in her book review says, "It transcends the boundaries of personal narrative and is at once a sociological treatise, a historical and

political record, a feminist critique, a protest against Hinduism and the sordid memoir of a cursed community” (Acharekar Literary Review).

Caste discrimination is one of the long living social injustices in the world. People were crushed and cornered in the name of caste. Due to this caste discrimination people suffer from poverty and they are treated as slave. Even though they are also Hindus the high caste Hindus consider them as pollutants because they were of lower caste. The caste system was formed by the Hindus themselves and they treat Dalits as untouchables even if they are Hindus. They were not allowed to use the same roads which the upper caste uses. They cannot enter the temple or fetch water from a common tank. There were several restrictions for the Dalits which Kamble has exposed in her autobiography.

Kamble is critically acclaimed and known for her autobiographical work *Jina Amucha*, written in Marathi. The title ‘Jina Amucha’ literally means ‘Our Existence’, which is reflective of the existence of the Dalits, often reduced to absence by the upper castes and powerful people. Feminist scholar Maxine Bernstein was instrumental in encouraging Kamble to publish her writings which Kamble had kept as a secret from her family. Bernstein discovered Kamble's interest and her writings in Phaltan where Bernstein was conducting her research. She encouraged and persuaded Baby Tai to publish her writings which soon became one of the best autobiographical accounts on caste, poverty, violence and triple discrimination faced by Dalit women. This auto narrative chronicles Kamble's life story in precolonial to postcolonial India. It is deeply embedded with two important critical moments in the Indian history: freedom from the British rule and anti-caste movement led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Thus, Kamble's autobiography is just not personal account of a woman's life history but it is a deeply political and a critical record of the making of the nation from the vantage

point of a very precarious social location. *Jina Amucha* public contribution is it is a nation's biography chronicled from the untouchable woman's point of view. It is also therefore a critical account the nation and its margins: lives of untouchables in caste Hindu society.

One of the major portions of the book articulates caste and gender discrimination and multi-layered violence suffered by Dalit women at the hands of the savarna (caste Hindus) and Dalit men. Kamble writes from an untouchable woman's perspective, not deterring from naming patriarchy in the untouchable community nor sparing the internalized patriarchy by Dalit women. Kamble also underscores how the caste Hindu women and men treated untouchables with contempt, disgust, and hate. This work became one of the most powerful and poignant auto-biographical writing in Marathi. The book was translated into English titled *The Prisons We Broke* by Maya Pandit and published by Orient Blackswan.

The system corrupted the mindset of the high castes. The excessive powers made them rude and forget human values. Kamble shows the invisible limits strained for the low castes by the caste system. It was not confined to personal behavior rather the high castes were allowed to inflict physical attacks on dalits. In such cases, low caste women were the soft targets for atrocities. If some new woman fails to behave accordingly it would be a great chance for the high castes to threaten and beat the low castes. They were the masters made by the highly exploitative social structure. The stick of the yeskar was the marker of his slavery but the high castes had created an illusion among the Mahars that the yeskar's stick was like a symbol of prestige. It was being considered as a marker of honour and the "wives in each Mahar family would worship it with haldi and kumkum" (77). The high castes had created a world of illusions for the dalits and it was governed on the concept of caste system. The caste

system destroyed the life of the dalits. The caste system and religious scriptures had allotted all anomalous jobs like carrying away dead animals, conveying news of death, and even digging the grave. They had to pass the news of demise in the scorching sun, heavy rains, and biting cold without fail.

Kamble, along with the major constraints of poverty and deprivation, throws light on the unhygienic living conditions and frequent attacks of contaminated disease the Mahars had to face. She says that the Maharwada symbolised utter poverty and total destitution. In addition to high caste people physical attacks, the Mahars were also dying of epidemics like cholera, plague and typhoid. Their ignorance and poverty could never enable them to get proper medication. As a result many of the Mahars had to succumb to death. The high caste played with the lives of the low castes and it was all for no fault on their parts. The shroud high caste Hindus had created such a mechanism that the low castes would automatically get grinded for no reason. The low castes were never accepted as human beings. Baby Kamble raises voice against the unreasonable exploitation of the dalits for no reason. She asks the question to the high caste people that why did they subjugate the poor and docile low castes.

Kamble further narrates the differences they had between them and high caste women regarding clothing and accessories. Dalit women were restricted even to copy and use the things in same manner. Only high caste women had the privilege of wearing their saris in such a manner that the border could be seen and a Mahar woman was supposed to hide the borders otherwise it was considered an offence to the high castes women. High caste women though become prey of their male folk. But they don't support women who belong to low position, even having the same experiences. It is perhaps because of the unequal distribution of power. High caste men keep command over each section whether it's low caste people or their own women.

It is evident that Dalit woman had to undergo domestic violence in the form of thrashing, physical torture, nose chopping, work overload and what not. She had no one to go but had to suffer silently in many forms and on different stages. She had suffered because of her birth, because of her caste, because of her poverty. There are multiple layers of her sufferings enfold for her. Life had been made a burden for her. Undoubtedly she had to pay a heavy price for being born. Kamble in an interview given to Maya Pandit opines:

Women are still slaves. And it is not just Dalit women; I see around me many women from both upper and lower caste. All women are facing problems. Especially, women from villages! Their oppressions does not come to light. All cases of the rape are suppressed for the fear of family honour, pressure from the dominant communities and political parties. Women works very hard and yet face so many problems in spite of slight improvement in the financial position (154).

Kamble's autobiography is not completely an account of her own self. She kept her own life out of her autobiography because she had her women and community to consider. Through her autobiography she has depicted the sufferings of women under patriarchal domination as well women's gradual consciousness against injustice. Just as the Varna system created caste and sanctioned discriminatory practices, patriarchy established the practice of making women dependent on men. Men have therefore dominated women ever since. Her autobiography very minutely observes the cause of women's plight. It is women's dependency and illiteracy that drags them into such miserable lives. Once a woman gets married she becomes responsibility to her in-laws. Women never have their own identity. It is believed that if a woman has her husband she has the whole world, if she does not have a husband

then the world holds nothing for her. Through her autobiography Kamble denies such belief. She has an identity as a writer and social worker. She is independent and out of shackles. Self-identity can only be achieved through self-exploration and consciousness. Thus she has written her autobiography not only to get an identity but to let the world come to know of the painful experiences women undergo because of gender politics as well as it encourage women to fight against patriarchal norms to build their own identity.

Dalits are treated as “untouchables” by the Hindu high caste people. They were grinded to the core and less than an animal to the dominant castes. Dalit women are the most pitiful being. They were triply discriminated by caste, class and gender. They were treated as a “Piece of Wood” by their own community men. Through the events that Baby Kamble narrates in her work *The Prison We Broke* comes an understanding that Dalit women are “triply discriminated”. Her work clearly portrays how the hegemonic Hindu society marginalise Dalits and how the mistreated Dalits suppresses their women. This work deals with the life of Dalit women through Baby Kamble’s work *The Prison We Broke* and attempts to find the possible remedies to such discrimination against the subalterns.

The first four chapters of *The Prison We Broke* describe various social evils the Dalit society is fraught with. Superstitions, impawning, possession of women by gods, drunkenness, harassment of bride in the hands of the in-laws and wife beating are few of the examples. These are intra-community back logs a Dalit constantly fighting to dispel. There are the constant curse of untouchability and exploitation at the hands of the upper caste people. Whereas the external world is speedily coping with the overall flow of development and progress, the Dalits remain cloistered within their own caste boundary delimited by the sons of Manu.

In the chapters five to nine, Baby Kamble gives a most unimaginable description of the humiliation of the Dalits. Men in general and women in particular. Dalit women fall the easiest prey of humiliation and exploitation in home and away, day and night. Baby exemplifies each of the structural hurdles-natural or societal-by individual experiences. Few of the choicest hurdles are always especially reserved for the Dalit women. Each Dalit woman has an inborn talent for multi-tasking. Dalit girl of any age is a beast burden. So, Dalit women suffer not only in the patriarchal bend of society but also in the matrilineal stereotype in their communities. Baby Kamble focuses special attention to the liberation of Dalit women through education and advises her fellow women for setting up a small scale business in the first step.

In the last part of her book Kamble talked about the responsibility of the present society. Even now discrimination is not completely wiped out from our society. There are a lot of villages which should be brought into the light of main stream. The educated people should work for them. Once, Baba Sahib worked for the community. That is why the society got freedom. Now those who enjoy freedom should work to unchain other. As a reader could hear another reformer's sound in Baby Kamble's voice. A new inspiration is born out of her voice. Education, prosperity and comforts should not make us unaware of the problems of society. We will have to utilize our faculties to support and guide others to the main stream, only then we can enjoy the real value of our life.

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A Journey Towards Self Realization in Paulo Coelho's

Veronika Decides to Die

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

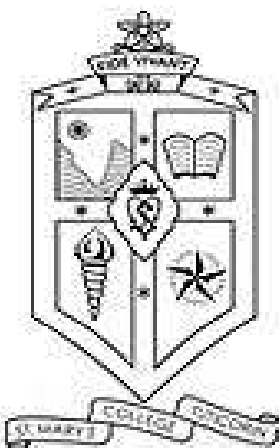
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POST GRADUATE IN ENGLISH

by

BRIDGITTA VINNARASI X.

(REG.NO. 19APEN09)



RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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CONTENTS

DECLARATION

CERTIFICATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	01
Two	Psychological Trauma	13
Three	Existential Crisis	23
Four	Thematic Concerns	36
Five	Summation	50
	Work Cited	55

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **A Journey towards Self Realization in Paulo Coelho's *Veronica Decides to Die*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar.

APRIL 2021

BRIDGITTA VINNARASI . X

THOOTHUKUDI

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **A Journey towards Self Realization in Paulo Coelho's *Veronica Decides to Die*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the award of the Degree of Post Graduate in English Literature, is a work done by Bridgitta Vinnarasi X. during the year 2020-2021, and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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PRINCIPAL

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PREFACE

The Thesis **A Journey Towards Self-Realization in Paulo Coelho's *Veronika Decides to Die*** enunciates the journey of Veronika, a young Slovenian woman, who sails between life and death, sanity and madness, happiness and despair, and finally towards self-realization. Coelho explores how the rules of the society pose a threat to individual identity and freedom. It also stresses on the importance of living a real life.

The thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter **Introduction** throws light on the perception of literature Latin American literature in general, their origin, growth and the other characteristics. Coelho's contemporary writers are also disclosed.

Chapter two entitled, **Psychological Trauma** analyses the mental stress undergone by all the characters in the Novel.

The third chapter, **Existential Crisis** explores the theory of existentialism and how the characters overcome their sufferings.

The fourth chapter, **Thematic Concerns** explains the various themes such as psychological depression, Mystic realization, feminism and self - realization.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums all the aspects up, dealt in the preceding chapters.

The researcher has consistently referred to and resorted to the guidelines prescribes by MLA Handbook 8th Edition for the preparation of the thesis.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature has the power to provoke thoughts in readers, making it a leisure activity that is intellectually productive. It has the power to impart a wider variety of experience to readers. Reading and discussion of literature force readers to make reasoned judgments about character motivation cause and effect, critical analysis of plot and more. On the basis of culture, Literature was named after its countries such as African Literature, Canadian Literature, British Literature and so on.

Latin American Literature is the national literature of the Spanish-speaking countries of the western hemisphere. It consists of the oral and the written literatures of Latin America (and the Caribbean) in several languages, particularly in Spanish, Portuguese, and indigenous languages of the Americans.

Historically, Latin American Literature includes the literary expression of the highly developed American-Indian civilizations conquered by the Spaniards. It arose to particular prominence globally during the second half of the twentieth century; largely due to the international success of the style known as magic realism. As such, the region's literature is often associated solely with this style and its most famous exponent is Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Latin American Literature largely obscures a rich and complex tradition of literary production that dates back many centuries. Over the years, it developed a rich and complex diversity of themes, forms, creative idioms and styles.

From the very moment, when Europeans encountered the New world as early explorers and settlers, they produced written accounts of their experience, such as

Columbus's letters or Bernal Diaz Del Castillo's description of the conqueror of Mexico. The first European poetry to be heard in the New World was most surely the ballads sung by Columbus's sailors in their settlement on the island of Hipamola. These romances which harkened back to the middle- ages, continued to be composed and sung in all areas where the Spaniards settled. More sophisticated poetry, following Italian Renaissance, began to be written shortly thereafter in the capitals of the viceroyalties or vice-kingdoms of Mexico and Pera. These cities became of European culture in America.

With the development of the printing press in the fifteenth century, the Spanish empire depended more and more on the written word. Writing in all areas, particularly in law and religious doctrine, became paramount in the empire's daily life. At times, Colonial practice stirred a lively debate about the ethics. The Pre-Colombian period of Latin American literature was marked by the oral traditions of Mesoamerican civilizations, such as the Olmecs, Mayans, and Aztecs. The Colonial period was important because it was the beginning of the written tradition in Latin American literature.

By the turn of the seventeenth century, most of the conquest of America had been accomplished and historians appointed by the Spanish crown, attempted to provide a comprehensive overview of the event. While historians were interpreting the events of the conquest and debating their consequences, literally life in the Spanish empire continued unabated.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, a distinctive literary tradition emerged. Then, Epic form proved to be the

most important manifestation of Renaissance style poetry in the first century of the colonial period.

In addition to the accounts of Spanish America earlier penned by European explorers, philosophers and naturalists, important hypsographical works were written by Creoles or by Spaniards who have lived most of their lives in one or more of the viceroyalties. Latin American from Mexico to Patagonia is enough alike to be recognized as one of the big divisions of the world, with some general characteristics distinguishing it from Anglo-America, Europe, the orient and the rest.

Although elites in Spanish America did not embrace enlighten ideals until the last years of the eighteenth century, authors began to explore new ways of thinking about nature and to develop new ways of imitating it in fictions and new models of viewing their societies. Lyrical and spiritual poems have survived, although they are of uneven quality. Epic poetry was not often attempted in Spanish during the first half of the eighteenth century. Satirical poetry was much more common.

The late eighteenth century saw the rise of the Latin American novel. In the early novels, one encounters at every turn the Neo-classical conviction that society would be reformed by a combination of informed individual choice and state regulation, for late eighteenth century authors and their crown and church patron. Neo classicism represented both the spirit of their age and the destined fate of society under their tutelage. But by the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, many of Spain's American dominations had achieved political independence. Latin American literature and national allegories are present in the novella *Concierto Barroco*. The problematical identity of Latin America is reflected on the recurrence of the theme in the literature created in the part of the continent.

Nineteenth century was a period of 'Foundational fictions' novels in the romantic or naturalist traditions that attempted to establish a sense of national identity, and which often focused on the indigenous questions or the dichotomy of 'civilization or barbarism'. The first Latin Americans to write under the sway of romanticism were the poets such as the Cuban and Jose Maria De Heredia.

After World War II Latin America enjoyed increasing economic prosperity and a new-found confidence gave rise to literary boom. From 1960 to 1967, the major works were published. Many of these novels were somewhat rebellious from the general view of Latin American culture. Authors crossed traditional boundaries, experimented with language and often mixed different styles of writing in their works. Boom writers ventured outside traditional narrative structures, embracing non-linearity and experimental narration, though the literary boom occurred. While Latin America was having commercial success, the works of this period tended to move away from the positives of the modernization that was underway. Boom's works tended not to focus on social and local issues but rather on universal and at times metaphysical themes. Some works anticipated an end to the prosperity that was occurring, and even predicted old problems that would resurface in the near future.

Post-Boom literature is sometimes characterized by a tendency towards irony and towards the use of popular genres. Some writers felt the success of the boom to be a burden, denounced the caricature that reduces Latin American literature to magical realism. Overall, contemporary literature in the region is vibrant and varied ranging from the best-selling. Latin American literary and cultural studies are currently re-capitalizing the oral transmission and the textual and visual presence of popular cultures, and there is still a lot to be learned about the symbolic and thematic value of this configuration in the context of the heterogeneity of Latin American literature.

The main periods of Latin American literature are Pre-Colombian, Colonial, Resistance, Modernismo, Boom, and Contemporary. Each period has a genre that ruled, ranging from first-person narratives, magical realism, philosophical short stories, anti-establishment poetry, and experimental prose. During the second half of the twentieth Century there is popularity in the international success of the style that is known as Magical Realism. The Latin American wars of Independence that occurred in the early nineteenth century in Latin America led to literary themes of identity, resistance, and human rights.

Magical Realism, that occurs magical or supernatural elements are introduced into a realistic fictional setting; magical realism will depict believable settings, characters, and circumstances, but the supernatural or magical is incorporated into the fiction. Authors who are associated with magical realism include Garcia Marquez, Carpentier, and Esquivel. Social realism in which the dark, depressing depictions of life in Latin America reflects the violent history of the region. Authors associated with social realism are Novas Calvo, Rulfo, and Arias. Female discourse fiction that makes its main theme as gender role. In Latin American society, authors who associates with the female discourse or feminist themes include Allende, Castellanos and Ferre.

The Latin American authors who have won the most prestigious literary award in the world, the Nobel Prize for Literature, are Gabriela Mistral , Miguel Angel Asturias , Pablo Neruda , Gabriel Garcia Marquez , Octavio Paz and Mario Vargas Llosa . Many writers contributed to Latin American Literature. One of the most prominent writers is Gabriel Garcia Margaret. His *cienanos de* is one of the most important works in world literature of the twentieth century. Borges opined that the work was the 'Don Quixote of Latin America'.

The Chilean poet, Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957) was a Chilean poet-diplomat, educator and humanist. In 1945 she became the first Latin American author to receive a Nobel Prize in Literature. She is the best-known poet of the time embodied in her person as much as in her works, the cultural values and traditions of a continent that had not been recognized until then with the most prestigious International prize. She always took the side of those who were mistreated by society-children, women, native Americans, Jews, and war victims. She tried to speak for them through her poetry in her many newspaper articles, her letters and her talks and actions as Chilean representative in International Organisations. Above all, she was concerned about the future of Latin America and its peoples, particularly those of native groups.

Another important writer is Cesar Vallejo (1892-1938), a Peruvian poet, playwright, journalist and novelist. Vallejo is best remembered today for the three anthologies of poems he published: *Los Heraldos Negros*, *Trilce*, and *Poemas Humanos*. In these works, Vallejo offered poems that were fresh, daring, modern and ultimately revolutionary. They showcased the abilities of an enormously talented writer whose style was often ahead of its time. Today Vallejo is often considered as one of the greatest poets of the modern era.

Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) who made an important contribution to Latin American Literature was born in an educated family. He was an Argentinian essayist, poet, translator and short story writer. During his long career, Borges wrote short stories that often involved philosophical and fantastical concepts and themes including dreams, infinity, labyrinths, and mythology. Hailed for the intelligence and imaginativeness of his works, Borges is credited as a forerunner of magical realism, a genre that weaves magical elements into a realistic depiction of the world. Some of

his works include *El Aleph*, *Ficciones*, and *Labyrinths*. Borges eventually influenced many significant Latin American writers who took up and further developed magical realism as a distinct feature of Latin American literature.

Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) is often considered the national poet of Chile, and his works have been popular and influential worldwide. He was also a diplomat, and politician. Neruda is known today for his poetry which is extraordinary for its sensuality and passion. Some of his works are *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair*, *Canto General* and *100 Sonnets of Love*. He was often considered the greatest poet of the twentieth century and was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1971.

Mario Vargas Llosa's contribution to Latin American Literature is significant. He was born in 1936. He was a Peruvian writer, novelist, journalist, and essayist. He has had a significant impact on literature and society. His works, which derive both from the realities of Peruvian life and his own experience, often tackle themes relating to politics and societal issues. Among his best-known works, *The Time of Hero*, *The Green House* and *The Conversation in the Cathedral* received the Nobel Prize for literature in 2010. One among Latin American writers and best-selling author is Paulo Coelho, whose work is chosen for further analysis.

The Brazilian writer, Paulo Coelho, who is one of the most widely read authors of the world, is known for his different themes. Paulo Coelho is a writer who has been nominated by Brazilian Academy of Letters and he is all time best-selling Portuguese language author. Coelho has always managed to come up with extraordinary topics for his writings and his artworks have won numerous literary awards and have also appeared on best sellers list in many countries.

Paulo Coelho was born on August 24, 1947 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. His father was an engineer. Coelho attended Jesuit schools and was raised by devout Catholic parents. They wanted him to be an engineer and he tried to stifle his desires to become a writer. The discovery of Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* aroused Coelho's spirit of rebellion and he began routinely to flout the family rules. His father took his behavior as a sign of mental illness and when Coelho was seventeen, he was twice admitted to a psychiatric hospital, where Coelho underwent several treatments.

Later, Coelho involved with a theatre group and began to work as a journalist. In the eyes of the comfortably off Christian family in Brazil of the time, the theatre was a hotbed of loose immorality. His frightened parents decided to break their promise and readmitted him in the hospital for the third time. When he came out, Coelho was even more lost and more enclosed in his own world. In despair, the family called in another doctor and he should not be in psychiatric hospital.

Paulo Coelho returned to continue his studies and it looked as if he was finally going to follow the route which his parents had prepared for him. But unluckily for the parents, this period happened to be in the sixties, and the Hippie movement had spread onto the world scene. These new trends took even in Brazil. Coelho wore his hair long and made a point of never carrying his identity card. He became a hippie and travelled all over South America, North Africa and Europe and involved in the 'drug, sex and rock 'n' roll' in 1970's. His passion for writing drove him to start a magazine of which only two issues were ever published.

Coelho has been married to an artist Christina Oiticica, in 1980. The couple divide their time between Europe and Brazil. He wrote song lyrics for Brazilian musicians protesting the country's military rule. He was jailed three times for his

political activism and subjected to the torture in prison. Coelho always loved writing and dreamed of being a writer from an early age. He had been an actor, journalist and theatre director. In searching for his own place in the world, Coelho discovered answers for the challenges that everyone faces and, in writing *The Alchemist*, he succeeded in the ambition he had nurtured since he was an adolescent to become a writer, who is read and respected throughout the world. His writings had helped millions to fulfill their own "Personal Legend".

Coelho's first book *Hell Archives* was published in 1982. However it was not successful. In 1986 he undertook a five hundred plus mile trek on the road Santiago de Compostela in north western Spain. He had a spiritual awakening on the trip and intuitively realized that it was time he started writing seriously. He wrote the novel *The Pilgrimage* which was published in 1987. It was an autobiographical account of his trek in Spain which explored man's need to find his own path in life. The very next year he published *The Alchemist* which becomes his best-known book. The novel tells the story of a shepherd who has a recurring dream of finding treasure in Egypt.

In 1990, Coelho released a novel about a beautiful young girl and her quest for knowledge *Bride*. The story deals with the girl's journey towards self-discovery and her relationships with the people she meets in her life. Throughout the 1990, he made it a point to write at least one novel every two years. His popular novels of the decade were *By the river Piedra I sat Down and Weep* (1994) and *Veronika Decides to Die* (1998).

Coelho welcomed the New Millennium with the book, *The Devil and Miss Prym* (2000) in which he told of the choices people have to make when faced with temptations. It was basically a tale of the battle between the Gods and the evil. The

novel *Eleven Minutes* was released in 2003. The plot revolved around the story of a prostitute who is well experienced in sex but does not believe that she ever finds true love.

Some of Coelho's most recent novels include *The Winter Stands Alone* (2008), *Aleph* (2010), *Manuscript found in Accra* (2012) and *Adultery* (2014). The president of Bulgaria, Georgi Paravanov, presented Coelho with The Honorable Award of the President of the Republic in May, 2006. He was presented with the World Economic Forum Crystal award in 1999. He also serves as the UNESCO special counselor for 'Intercultural Dialogues and Spiritual Convergences'.

Coelho writes up to three blog posts a week at his blog, and has over 289.5 million fans on Face book, and more than 11.4 million followers on Twitter, a higher number than authors such as Stephen King and J.K. Rowling. Coelho discussed his relationship with readers through social media platforms with *The Wall Street Journal* in August 2014.

In toto, Coelho has published 30 books. Three of them *The Pilgrimage*, *The Valkyries* and *Aleph* are autobiographical, while the majority of the rest are fictional, although rooted in his life experiences. Others, like *Maktub*, *the Manual of the Warrior of Light*, and *Like the flowing River*, are collections of essays, newspaper columns, or selected teachings. Coelho has sold more than 210 million books in over 170 countries worldwide and his works has been translated into 81 languages. He has won 115 international prizes and awards and in 2007 was named a United Nations Messenger of Peace.

Coelho has always managed to come up with extraordinary topics for his writings and his artworks have won numerous literary awards and have also appeared

on best sellers list in many countries. One of his critically acclaimed books *Veronika Decides to Die* brings a great impact among the readers. According to critical acclaim by Denver Post *Veronika Decides to Die* is “Coelho’s most artful work to date, pulling the reader into discussion”. The chosen writer of the project Paulo Coelho has faced different problems. He was the most frustrated man who was so unpredictable, that he had to get admitted to an asylum, a mental hospital and was being treated as a mad person. Paulo Coelho spent many days in the mental hospital. He has used his own experience in his novel *Veronika Decides to Die*. The upcoming chapter would provide the story line of the Novel, *Veronika Decides to Die*.

Chapter Two

Psychological Trauma

Paulo Coelho's Veronika Decides to Die, narrates the story of Veronika, a beautiful young woman from Slovenia. Coelho in this novel provides an exemplary story articulating hope, depicting a situation in which one can find freedom, joy, integrity and truth under limiting and most challenging circumstances. Coelho also explores the importance of living a real life and how closed communities and the rules of the society pose a threat to individual identity and freedom. Coelho also gives an insight into the societies which term the individual as mad when they fail to comply with the expectations of the society. The story is about the journey of Veronika's transformation from a depressed would be suicide to an affirmed survivor. The protagonist was not happy with her life though she had everything, loving family, money, a fulfilling job etc. She always felt that her life lacked any purpose and the future seemed very worse. She was very sure that nothing can fill her void in life and decides to commit suicide

Veronika thinks of ways to die, but she feels afraid. She wants to slash her wrist but then she says that the nuns will have troubles in getting rid of her blood in the convent which she rent from the nuns, though later she does not care about them anymore. Then she wants to jump off from a building in Ljubljana, the town where she lives she says that her parents might be shocked to see her body after she falls from the heights. She wants to die but she is afraid to cut off the line of her own life. So Veronika decides to take sleeping pills because she feels that she can stop anytime if she regrets her decision to suicide while the other attempts are unstoppable.

Veronika had cooked up an eccentric story to make her suicide look more extraordinary and worthy that she had attempted suicide because a magazine did not know where her country Slovenia was. So, she wanted her suicide attempt to be something in honor of her country's cause. But, the actual reasons behind her decisions to die were something seemingly absurd yet serious. The first reason was that everything in her life was the same and once her youth was gone, the old age would begin and there would be illness and departure of her friends and so she would gain nothing by continuing to live. The second reason was more philosophical, Veronika read newspapers, watched TV and so she was aware of what was going on in the world and in her eyes, everything was wrong and she had no way of putting things right and that gave her a sense of powerlessness.

When the readers go deeper into the life of Veronika, they could meet her as a girl who was not given the freedom to think and do as she wished or dreamed in her life. She deliberately or forcibly tuned her life in accordance of her parent's wishes especially her mother. Veronika's dream since her childhood was to be a pianist. Her teacher recognized her talent and encouraged her to be a professional. But, when she told her dream to her mother, she looked at her with much love and affection and said that no one made a living playing a piano. And when Veronika asked her mother why she wanted her to have lessons on piano she replied, "To develop your artistic gifts that's all. A husband likes that kind of things in a wife; he can show you off at parties. Forget about being a pianist, and go study law, that's the profession for future." (Coelho 85).

Veronika did as her mother told and finished her studies, went to university, got a good degree but ended up being a librarian. If her wishes were granted, if her dreams were cherished, she would have become one of the most famous pianists in

the world. She would have led a happy life enjoying moments of her life calling it the most meaningful and purposeful life. Her decision to leave the world of music and entering into a legal profession was a mistake. Veronika never viewed her life from an angle of her own passion and desires, instead she hired the views and dreams of others, pawned her valuable life for the pleasure of people around her. Veronika was a girl who forgot to live for herself, who forgot to give colours to life with her dreams.

Veronika does not die, but comes to consciousness in the notorious lunatic asylum, Villette, where she is told by Dr. Igor that her attempt to kill herself, initially unsuccessful, will inevitably succeed. She has damaged her heart to the point where it will be unable to sustain her life for much longer than five days. Locked in a ward with other "insane" people, Veronika struggles to come to terms with both her failure and her impending success. Her doctor, Igor, tells her that as she has damaged her heart so much that she only has a few days to live, which she is expected to live out in the institution. Dr. Igor in the story sought out to treat her not by an awareness of life and challenges and by quite a vicious awareness of death. Aside from giving sedatives to Veronika for her to sleep and be calm, they kept on injecting in her a certain drug, Fenotal, which simulated a biological reaction that resembled a heart attack. Veronika was made to believe that her attempted suicide has made her heart damaged and vulnerable that she really wouldn't last for very long. The treatment was actually part of Dr. Igor's research on Vitriol. Though initially disappointed by her unsuccessful suicide, as the days continue, she finds herself experiencing life more fully than ever before, as she has nothing.

"Make no mistake about people who leap from burning windows. Their terror of falling from a great height is still just as great as it would be for you or me standing speculatively at the same window just checking out the view; i.e. the

fear of falling remains a constant. The variable here is the other terror, the fire's flames: when the flames get close enough, falling to death becomes the slightly less terrible of two terrors" (Wallace).

Her actions are uninhibited by other's opinions and expectations. While at the institution she meets a number of patients with varied experiences with "madness." She questions the nature of insanity as she gets to know them. Over the days that follow, Veronika questions about whether she is truly insane and met with varying responses by several of the institution's nurses.

Zedka, another patient at Villette whose soul travels outside her body in a process narration refers to as "astral projection." Zedka is suffering from panic disorder, a mental illness. She is being treated with shock treatment which is generally considered to be inhuman, where the patient is given electric shocks and the patient suffers a lot, sometimes the torture becomes so unbearable that the patient dies. In Villette, Zedka is being treated with the treatment which is forbidden outside because it is very risky and vulnerable. She is being injected a dose of insulin which is used by diabetics to combat high blood glucose. However when the dose is much larger than normal, the consequent drop in blood glucose provokes a state of coma. The state of coma allows the organisms to rest its functions and thus the existing tension disappears. Her eyes fixed on some point in the distance. She cannot speak, move or hear. But she can experience something alluring, enchanting, fascinating, and dynamic during her experience of insulin shock. She can leave her body and fly anywhere as if floating in space. She is taking her astral journey.

Zedka learns about the treatment, she reads many books regarding astral journey and shock treatment and she comes to know that the treatment was used in 1930, but had been completely banned and presently it was a crime. No one had

experienced such things, except Zedka who had felt its magic. So, she starts reading about occultism or the existence of soul. And she finds that she is experiencing astral travel which was experienced by many people. She learns the techniques and with the help of her philosophical knowledge and psychiatric treatment she can realize the mystic experience of astral travel.

At first there is the strange irritating sound and her spirit gets separated from her body, followed by a shock, a rapid loss of consciousness, and then she feels the peace and joy of floating in the air. But her spirit remains attached to her body by a silvery cord, a cord that could be stretched indefinitely. (47 -48) According to many legends if the cord is cut the person may die. Zedka, with the help of the astral journey, can go anywhere, almost anywhere in the world and return to her body, the cord is so thin that no one can see it.

Zedka can change her roots not physically like planes but imagining and concentrating on the exact location. The astral journey is made through mysterious tunnels. Initially she thought that during her astral journey she may meet ghosts but she found the spirits of many living people, many of them not even aware of what their spirits were experiencing, because in some other part of the world they were sleeping deeply. They were dreaming. Zedka was not happy with her life, she was thirty-five years old, married happily with a well-settled handsome man, had children, almost everything that is needed to live a happy life, but the life she was living was material, totally practical so there was no place for emotions, feelings, passions.

But one day Veronika came across the statue of Persene and suddenly remembered her first love. The feeling of her first love started disturbing her and she started thinking about it continuously and it affected her normal behavior. She needed love, emotions to sooth her but she got nothing from her family. And she became

mentally imbalanced. She could fulfill almost all her impossible desires with the help of her astral travel. She is happy now and she is cured. It doesn't matter whether it's true or not but she proves it scientifically and it helps her to get rid of her depression. In this way mystic realization helps Zedka to realize her life and the mystery of being alive.

Mari, a member of a highly functional group of inmates known as The Fraternity. Mari was carefully included into the novel by the author so as to reveal the complications in the life of married women. Mari was a lawyer by her profession. She loved and respected her career a lot and so she was a successful and satisfied lawyer. But in her life, fate played its role wildly. She, who was living a normal and happy life with her husband and children, suddenly began experiencing something strange in her body. With no reason sweat was pouring down in her body and strange light in her eyes. She could not walk properly. She had never felt so frightened in her life. But Mari experienced similar pain and fear again and that led to drastic changes in her simple and quiet life. She felt intense fear and sense of alienation from reality, the same loss of self-control. Moreover, she started to feel guilty about her husband, obliged to do his own job as well as all the housework.

As the days passed and the situation remained totally unresolved, the slightest thing made Veronika lose her temper and she started shouting and then sobbed hysterically. And so on the advice of one of the colleagues of her, she herself went to Villette, the mental hospital. Dr. Igor, the director of the hospital told her not to worry as she was suffering from nothing serious but a mere panic disorder caused by just a chemical imbalance in the body like depression. So, Dr. Igor told Mari to go back home. But to his surprise, Mari told him that she didn't want to go back because her husband needed time to recover from those months he had spent looking after her. Dr.

Igor accepted her as a patient making it absolutely clear that it wasn't necessary. Mari got the necessary medication and proper psychiatric treatment and fortunately her illness completely disappeared. And so, she was preparing herself to leave Villette and join her family. Unexpectedly, one day the colleague who advised her to consult a Psychiatrist came to Villette and told her that Mari had to retire from her profession. Mari could not believe her ears. She could not argue because she knew the fact that they could no longer bear a lawyer who got admitted in a mental asylum. But Mari wanted her life back.

The colleague was not ready to pay attention to her words. He was stubborn in implementing the company's cruel decision on the life of a poor soul. After that incidence Mari was slowly accepting the reality, heartless deeds of people, and was slowly overcoming the shock. But fate was not ready to spare Mari. A few days later a lawyer visited her at Villette, smiled at her and said that he was there at her husband's request. And told her "This is an application for divorce. Obviously, though he will continue to pay all your hospital bills as long you remain in here". (64) Mari didn't utter a word; she didn't argue and she signed everything. She stood up and went to Dr. Igor's consulting room and told him that her symptoms had returned and she can't go back home. Dr. Igor knew that she was lying and he didn't say anything but accepted her desire to stay in Villette. If the world was a bit merciful to Mari, if the colleagues and seniors of her firm had realized the true worth and talent of Mari, if her husband called her back to his life and hugged her with love and care which he could provide in the world, Mari would never have chained her life in a bizarre world like Villette.

Eduard's case is not much different from that of Veronika's. His father was a Yugoslavian Ambassador and very rich. His family had been preparing Eduard to follow his father's footsteps. But one day he met with an accident and that led to a

tremendous change in his life. While he was admitted in the hospital a nurse gave him a book which was about Visionaries whose ideas had shaken the world, people, with their own vision about paradise, like Jesus Christ, Francis of Assisi, Ignatius Loyola, Anthony, Columbus, Karl Marx, Theresa of Avila and so on. He decided to learn painting and show the world the visions those men and women had experienced. And so, he went out in search of painters and artists. His parents were worried about the life and deeds of Eduard and his eccentric affinity for art. His father told him to finish his secondary education, so that he could set him on the path to a diplomatic career. Eduard said that he did not want to be a diplomat and he wanted to be a painter. Eduard soon heard the heart-breaking words of his father that turned his life upside down,

Since you were born, we've built up such dreams of how our lives would be. You're everything to us, our future and our past. Your Grandfathers were civil servants and I had to fight like a lion to enter the diplomatic career and make my way up the ladder. And I did all this just to create a space for you, I've got the pen with which I signed my first document as an ambassador and I lovingly saved it to pass on to you the day you do the same. Don't let us down son. We won't live forever and we want to die in peace, knowing that we've set you on the right path in life. (96)

Eduard thought about his father's words deeply. He knew very well that if he gave up his painting the Vision of Paradise would never see the light of day and nothing else in this world could give him the same feelings of joy and pleasure. Yet something forced him to tell his parents that they were right, it was just a youthful dream, and his enthusiasm of painting had passed. But Eduard's life was not easy and normal since then. He lost the control of his mind. He was treated by specialists and

was diagnosed with a rare form of schizophrenia to feel without touch, to hear without words, to see without being near. It was too problematic for the family to look after him and so they had no choice other than to leave him in Villette. So, like Veronika, Eduard too pawned his dreams and life for the peace and happiness of his parents. When he lost the focus and destination of his soul, he missed the track of his life and began leading a life reaching nowhere.

Eduard, is drawn to a piano in the asylum's common room. There, under the night of the new moon, Veronika returns to her first love, music, and as Eduard watches, finds herself playing in ways she never had before. She also, in response to both her attraction to Eduard and the advice of Mari to try what had once been forbidden, masturbates to the point of having several climaxes. All these, in spite of having a series of painful and frightening heart attacks, arouses in Veronika, the desire to try even more experiences, and eventually the desire to live as fully as she can in the time remaining to her.

During her 'stay' Veronika decided to play the piano, and poured out her heart by playing all the sonatas and chords that she knew. It was then that she had met Eduard. He came and stood by the piano, quietly listening to Veronika's music. The only visible response from the schizophrenic was his eyes that gleamed and seem to talk. And that is how they formed their relationship, Edward, with his eyes silently asking Veronika to play for him while the latter doing so out of the request and out of her own wanting, liking and need. Eduard could actually speak and talk, only he does so with Mari, the leader of the Fraternity, the same Fraternity Veronika felt so insecure with on her first day. Veronika was also able to connect with Mari, during one Sufi meeting when Mari wasn't as aggressive as she was before, but actually

smiled at her. It was Mari who have asked her how far she could go, giving pleasure to herself.

Eventually, in the end of the novel Zedka was released from the institution and she returned to her family. Mari on the other hand, went off to Sarajevo, to pursue and do what she really wanted to do, and that is to help the needy. Veronika and Eduard broke out of Vilete, so as to celebrate the former's last night, as she was about to die and for the latter to pursue his dreams of becoming a painter. While Dr. Igor was to complete the documentation of his thesis as well as to take care of the business of the missing people in his institution. Meanwhile, the narration also explores the experiences, both past and present, of Veronika's fellow inmates. Zedka's fascination with what the narrative describes as the ideal, "Impossible Love," Mari's rejection of her life as a lawyer in favor of a life of service, and Eduard's search for and exploration of "Visions of Paradise" are all described within the context of Veronika's gradual experience of awakening to the possibility of a more free and full life. This sort of life, the narrative suggests, is held to be "insane" by those in the "real" world but which, the narrative contends, is the only sort of life that is truly "lived." Eventually, Zedka, Mari and Eduard all, in various ways and for various reasons, leave the confines of Vilete. Eduard is accompanied by Veronika who is determined to live what she believes to be what little life she has left to the fullest. At this point, narration reveals that for purposes of his own, Dr. Igor has manipulated Veronika into believing she is about to die, when she is in fact going to live. As Veronika approaches her final 24 hours, she finds herself strengthened by life and tells Dr. Igor she desires to leave the institution in her final hours to see Ljubljana castle and give herself to one man, to the city, to life and, finally, to death. However, it is

revealed that Veronika was not in fact dying, but that Dr. Igor merely told her that she was in order to attempt to shock her into appreciating her life

Life is a miracle. It's a big island with hidden treasures which many fails to realize. Veronika, in *Veronika Decides to Die*, never expected that she could regain her life with a complete realisation of its purpose and meaning. She began enjoying the sun again, the mountains and even the life's problem and she began to accept that the meaninglessness of life was no one's fault but her alone. She never thought her life become an inspiration for people around her, to know to real worth and destination of their lives.

The young woman's (Veronika) case, though was drastic because she was so young and because she now wanted to live again, something they all knew to be impossible. Some people asked themselves 'What if that happened to me? I do have a chance to live. Am I making good use of it?' (101).

Veronika thus changed the perceptions and attitudes of people, in Villette, who decided to spend their entire life in the mental hospital and not to move to the world outside.

Mari thought about her own life and future and, realized that the days she had in her hands were really worth than she expected. And she prepared herself to leave Villette and to begin a new life serving the poor people at Bosnia. Mari said,

"I too asked myself what I was doing in this hospital. And I thought how very interesting to be down in this square, at the Three Bridges, in the market place opposite to the theater buying apples and talking about the weather. Obviously, I'd be struggling with a lot of other neighbours, the ironic look of the people who don't understand me,

solitude, my children's carping. But all that is just a part of life. I am thinking of going round my ex-husband's tonight, just to say "Thank You. (137)

The piano hall at Vilete was a great relief to Veronika. She spent hours there, recollecting the musical chords she had learned and practiced at her school. There was a silence to her music, Eduard, the Schizophrenic. It was the music and the presence of Eduard that helped Veronika regain the meaning of her life. She loved Eduard beyond everything in her life and was ready to accept him because Veronika was sure her love could bring him back to his normal life. Veronika achieved the heart of Eduard. They moved out of the meaninglessness world of Vilete to the new meaningful, poetic, romantic world awaiting them outside. Veronika helped Eduard to move into his world of art and 'Vision of Paradise'. The narrative concludes with Veronika and Eduard celebrating their freedom and with Dr. Igor celebrating the success of his experiment. Thus Eduard fulfilled the purpose and destination of his life holding the hands of Veronika. And Veronika with a heart filled with hope and eyes wet with tears of love and gratitude says,

Thank you for giving meaning to my life. I came into this world in order to go through everything I've gone through, attempted suicide, ruining my heart, meeting you, coming up to this castle letting you engrave my face and soul. That is the only reason I came into the world, to make you go back to the path you strayed from. (186)

Chapter Three

Existential Crisis

Existentialism is a movement in philosophy and literature that emphasizes individual existence, freedom and choice. It focuses on the question of human existence, and the feeling that there is no purpose of existence. The term was explicitly adopted as a self-description by Jean-Paul Sartre, and through the wide dissemination of the post-war literary and philosophical output of Sartre and his associates notably Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Albert Camus existentialism became identified with a cultural movement that flourished in Europe in the 1940s and 1950s. Jonathan Webber argues that “as originally defined by Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre, existentialism is the ethical theory that we ought to treat the freedom at the core of human existence as intrinsically valuable and the foundation of all other values”(2). The lack of humanity results in fragmentation, frustration, chaos, desperation, perplexity, and detachment in the human psyche. The socio-cultural pressures tend to affect the inner peace causing disorders in physical, mental and psychological attitudes. Being crushed under the pressure of money-worshipping degraded society, the common man experiences existential trauma and terror of the world, which makes his self powerless. All such threats, transform men into abnormal and aberrated souls who deviate from the normal stream. The mental illnesses of his boredom and mandatory life make him question his existence.

Issues about the mental disorders are very complex, and many types of research have attempted to resolve the mental illness, which remains a great threat to human beings. The factors related to mental disorders, including economic factors, civil liberty issues, skeptical approach in familial relationships, and mental illness

which like schizophrenia and bipolar disorders, have a dangerous effect on committing suicide or involving in homicide.

In *Veronika Decides to Die* Paulo Coelho portrays a young pianist Veronika who attempts suicide and is admitted in an asylum. Veronika is complex and displays the capability to have more than one side to think and react. To display the element of psychological depression, the author brings out the feelings of Veronika. She struggles to make small decisions. “And she was shocked by how quickly she could change her mind, since only moments before she had thought exactly the opposite” (6). The character is described to feel despair, a sense of futility, pessimism, anxiety, and difficulties in making decisions. Veronika feels she is sinking and going into the state of permanent gloom. The complete apathy is sign of psychological depression, which leads Veronika’s to commit suicide. Coelho has pointed out in the book that atmospheric conditions as well as personal choices can be responsible for a person to fall in psychological depression.

Veronika, is not satisfied by the life as a librarian and she feels it is a deadening monotonous routine. She gets bored, because she has the same routine every day. It leads her to the thought that everything in her life was the same. She anticipates that her life would grow more inferior as she gets older. She imagines her ripened days of life where all her darkest fears surround her leaving her with only complaints and forlornness. Veronika seriously considers that suffering and pain is proposition to ageing. She would gain nothing by continuing to live indeed the likelihood of suffering only increased. “She wasn’t killing herself because of a lack of love. It wasn’t because she felt unloved by her family, or had money problems or an incurable disease” (9).

Veronika experiences purposelessness in her life. When she takes four packets of sleeping pills, she loses her consciousness by experiencing a kind of nausea. Her life is claustrophobic and monotonous. In addition, she is teased and humiliated by the people there. She now develops hatred towards her life and decides once again to kill herself again. When she asks the members of the Fraternity group in the asylum to provide her with sleeping pills, she is not able to get the pills. This depression of Veronika is a kind of trauma associated with Existential Psychology. Veronika is depicted to undergo emotional sufferings of nervousness, anxiety, temperament, uselessness. With each passing day Veronika slips into a dominion of complete darkness. The absence of enthusiasm and positivity is an ensured communication of depression. Persons who are depressed and find meaningless in their existence are said to experience a psychic illness called Existential Depression. Existential Depression can be caused by various life events, and the changes resulting in making the individual feel hopeless, sad, anxious, empty, helpless, worthless, guilty, irritable, ashamed or restless. Existential Depression is a type of depression found in many gifted individuals who have been made to part with the pursuing of their talent. It may lead to isolation, alienation, meaninglessness and even death.

Along with Veronika, another character in the story is suffering from Chronic Depression is Zedka, who suffers from acute psychological depression. She feels that it is a great deception when the society seems to be happy and comfortable with life. Even the very act of children playing appears unfair to her. She associates her mood with the climatic conditions. Zedka feels the rough and cold weather keeps her emotions and mood at ease. Zedka is mentally ill. She is suffering from depression, lack of chemical substance, serotonin in the organism and madness is the inability to communicate your ideas and one in a every five individuals suffers from mental

disorder. Serotonin is one of the compound responsible for how human beings feel. A lack of serotonin impairs one's capacity to concentrate at work, to sleep, to eat and to enjoy life's pleasures. When this substance is completely absent, the person experiences despair, pessimism, a sense of futility, terrible tiredness, anxiety, difficulties in making decision or ends up sinking into permanent gloom, which leads either to complete apathy or to suicide. Any drastic change in life could trigger depression. Zedka is different from material beings who only think and believe in material things that can be seen with open eyes.

Dr. Igor in the story *Veronika Decides to Die* makes Veronika realize the meaning and lost importance of her life. He wants her to find the lost thirst of life. He said her that her heart is now irreparably damaged and she has nothing more to lose or gain, she should live the next seven days of her life to fullest. Therefore, by unknowing the truth, Veronika, thought that every day is a miracle because the death has not come to pick her. Hence, Veronika thinks that every day is her last day to live. By adopting that each day is a crucial, she develops her style of life as well as every day is a miracle. She would consider each day a miracle which indeed it is, when you consider the number of unexpected things that could happen in each second of our fragile existences and during this period she realizes that life is vibrant and invaluable. Dr. Igor makes up this story to make Veronika realizes the meaning and lost thirst for life.

In the meantime, Veronika sees a piano at the lounge in Villette. She starts remembering her childhood days spent with her parents. They were very affectionate to Veronika in spite of the fact that they had fights and misunderstandings between them. When she was a school girl, she was sent to piano classes by her parents. She found music to be her talent and decided to devote her entire life to her passion. But

when she discussed her passion with her mother, she discouraged her. She told her that Veronika should pass her degree, get a good job with a good salary, and not think much about music.

Veronika did what her mother told her and ended up in a job as librarian. Now she realizes that she was unsatisfied with the life in which her parents helped to make. She wants to do something different from her routine work. She develops hatred towards her father and mother and thinks that their love is responsible for her condition, a 'personal hell' "She hated the love she had been given, because it had asked for nothing in return, which was absurd, unreal, against the law of nature" (62). She realizes that this is the frustration, which has been building up all these years and has resulted in her depression. She observes, when she has achieved almost everything she wanted in life, she had reached the conclusion that her existence had no meaning, because every day was the same. And she had decided to die.

Veronika finds herself to be a true artist who is happy only when she pursues her passion, playing the piano. She now believes that music is the only means through which she can cleanse her heart and soul. When she starts playing, she finds that the notes gracefully placed from her fingers attracts everyone in the asylum, especially a person named Eduard who silently stands by her side and carefully listens to the music. For the first time Veronika feels an exhilaration that she has something special to do in the world she lives. She also notices that her hatred seems to diminish when she plays the piano. She pounded the piano again, once, twice, ten, twenty times, and each time she did it, her hatred seemed to diminish, until it passed away completely. Veronika soon develops an urge for living a new life of her passion. She starts loving Eduard who admires her versatile genius in playing the piano. They engage themselves in an affair satisfying all their repressed desires.

Eduard was admitted in the asylum as a schizophrenic, but now he reveals a past similar to Veronika, a true artist who had undergone existential depression and thus became a mentally insane person. Eduard had a fascination for painting, but his father and mother wanted him to finish his degree in the American college and wished him to get a job. But Eduard was not able to accept his parent's wishes and continued his passion on painting. As a result, he did not concentrate on his studies and was expelled from the college for questioning the teachers. His parents showed so much love and concern but they also demanded that he follow their status in high society. His father threatened him with his love saying, "If you really love us, do as I ask. If you don't love us, then carry on as you are now" (173). Eduard was caught between the love of his parents and the passion for his art. The tough situation gave him depression and made him a Schizophrenic.

When Veronika and Eduard find someone to share their passions with, they slowly recover from their hatred of life and start accepting life and enjoying the pleasures of life side by side. Cognitive-behavioral therapy developed by Albert Ellis and Aaron T. Beck, is used for suicide prevention and treatment in individuals. The chief process of this therapy is allowing the patients to freely express themselves. This is also called 'talking therapy'. Veronika was able to express herself to Eduard with whom she found herself comfortable. Here was a person who truly understood and praised her artistic qualities. She felt the need for living. In spite of being weak, she played the piano tirelessly throughout the night for Eduard. Thus, Veronika was able to break away from her past towards a new life.

On the other hand, Eduard is also able to recover from schizophrenia through his love for Veronika. According to learning about Schizophrenia Rays of Hope, "Persons with schizophrenia should persistently try to set goals, and realistically

assess progress on a regular basis” . Eduard now has a chance to indulge in and express his talent through his love for Veronika. She motivates him and Eduard too gets a true admirer of his talent. His passion of becoming a painter is finally achieved through his love for Veronika. Eduard and Veronika, the true artists recognizes their potentials in Villette, and decide to lead a life of passion. The existence of love is the important thing in giving motivation since it carries happiness and sadness altogether at the same time.

Veronika and Eduard finally escape from Villette to pursue their dreams with each other's support. They are not bothered about the society. For the world, they are still mad people, but for themselves they are pursuing their vision. Thus, the Existential Depression in Eduard and Veronika slowly vanishes from them through the power of love, which gives them fruitfulness in living: “Love is above wisdom, just as the Virgin is above the snake” (184).

Existentialism is a 20th century philosophical approach which emphasizes the existence of human beings solely as the outcome of one's choice. The path that the individual, being, a free and responsible agent chooses, determines their future developments. It emphasizes the fact that there is no particular reason for such an existence. It even disregards the existence of all pervasive God or transcendental force to guide this existence. Everything that one sees today is the result of the decision taken by the individual, rather the choice made by the individual in the past.

Existentialism in the novels of Paulo Coelho with the advancement of technology and the increasing fret and fever of life existential themes have invariably penetrated deeper into the society constantly trying to prove what it is to be human. An idea expressed by Paulo Coelho about existentialism is that,

“The world needs what existential psychotherapy has to offer, the culture is crying for vivification, for enlightenment and to awaken and to transform. In order to meet that need, we as Modern Existentialists must learn to speak the language of the people and introduce them to the works of existentialism on their terms.”

This exactly what he has done through his novels. Coelho has repeatedly used existential themes in his novel. Though the novel is woven around insanity, the greater part it deals with the deliberate choice to live- a choice, everyone has to make at some point of life. Coelho, through the story tries to answer some of the questions that lie hidden in the deeper recesses of one's mind, the answer to which a common man searches throughout his life. At a point he reminds his readers “You are someone who is different, but one who wants to be same as everyone else. And that in my view is a serious illness. God chose you to be different. Why are you disappointing God with this kind of attitude?” (167). It is stated here how each one is unique and how he tends to forget this when he tries to equate himself with other fellows and open the doors to unforeseen miseries.

The competitiveness within oneself makes him overlook unique potentialities and at the end he tries to make himself a replica of someone else which forms the root of all our problems. At another point Paulo Coelho teaches everyone to believe in himself, believe in his beliefs, his ideals which alone can bring to maturity. This he brings out through a conversation between two inmates of the asylum:

“Anyone who lives in her own world is crazy. Like schizophrenics, psychopaths, maniacs. I mean people who are different from others.’ Like you?’ On the other hand,’ Zedka continued, pretending not to

have heard the remark, ‘you have Einstein, saying that there was no time or space, just a combination of the two.’”

The novel is filled with numerous inspiring quotations, quotations which make the readers think of life, think it in a different way and find a new meaning to the mundane existence and if possible add colours to it.

Freudian Psychology describes about the eros (life instinct) and thanatos (death instinct) existence with Veronika. He drives that both life and death coincide and conflict within the individual and among individuals. Eros is the drive of life, love, creativity, and sexuality, self-satisfaction, and species preservation. Thanatos, from the Greek word “Death” is the drive of aggression, sadism, destruction, violence, and death. Veronika’s reason to commit suicide is due to the loss of motive to live. She has a strong death instinct level so she decides to go carnal by ending her life. Boredom has taken away her sanity. The last is the recovery of life instinct where she meets a lover, but she need to let him go. The life instinct finally finds its way, however, Veronika finally goes to her direction to understand the meaning of her life. Freudian psychology eventually becomes a tool to analyze the motivation of Veronika in creating a new meaning of life.

Veronika Decides to Die inspires the readers to think of the why and how of existence but also goes much deeper within the consciousness of the characters and places him/her in life like situation and through the use of interior monologues and dialogues discuss, the probable thoughts that always cloud the mind of the readers. Paulo Coelho in his novels takes up different situations and makes his characters respond in the same way as any other human being would have done in that situation and then tries to come to a conclusion by using some deep philosophy but not the ones

which have been used by the philosophers. His books are deeply imbued in philosophy, a philosophy which the readers feel to be their very own. While reading the novels the readers find themselves inseparable from the characters because the issues, the problems that are dealt in the novel are common to everyone. Thus, Coelho diffuses existential issues through the stories of the novels without being deeply philosophical and making it easy for every reader to untie the knots of life and live every moment of it.

Chapter Four

Thematic Concerns

In the novel, *Veronika Decides to Die*, Paulo Coelho, has thrown light on the phylogeny of feminism and their Utopian emotions using symbolism of the asylum through his style. The author has made a sound impression by stating materialistic comfort which no way guarantees a person's mental well-being. Paulo Coelho makes a distinct note on mental health and positivity towards the character in the novel who was subjected to existential crisis and finally rages with strong emotion to go after her passion. The protagonist Veronika becomes fully aware that life is not a mere travel but a journey of exploration and self-realization. Paulo Coelho has specified feminism, conflated religious and philosophical ideas eventually succeeding in all areas. It is a sound representation of the author's desires. The author's rebellious teenage is very vivid in his writing. All through his childhood Coelho had been extensively creative and aspired to be a writer. However, his parents were worried of their son's attitude which made them send him to a mental asylum. As a child he had to undergo so many therapies and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). 'He brings out his experience through the character of Eduard in the book'. Nonetheless, many theories of feminism have been discussed in the book. Numerous symbols have been aptly employed throughout the novel that speaks about feminist theories.

Society has couched certain rules and regulations by which women are expected to live. Women have been caged in the patriarch world, with direction on how one is supposed to behave. If any individual stands out and voices her own opinion, they are seen under the prism of psychoanalytical model. Regardless of all these, the novel *Veronika Decides to Die* breaks the shackles of the society and

comprehends how acceptance of one's own and self-realization can lead to psychological enlightenment. The Theme of self-realization, feminism, Mystic Realism and depression is highlighted in the novel *Veronika Decides to Die* by Paulo Coelho.

Some of the most common symptoms of depression is associated with existential crisis, weakness in terms of both mental and physical state and dejected mood and lifestyle. In such case, the individual suffers an intense infliction to carry on with his day to day social life or profession. Depression can cast down a person's state of being in highly drastic measures. The protagonist of the novel 'Veronika' is an illustration of a depressed individual. She finds her life very prosaic and all the materialistic comfort or the affection of her family doesn't excite her. The atmosphere of gloominess and melancholy distress her and she does not find any interest in her job as librarian. The characterization of Veronika is composite in nature. It provokes the readers to consider there is more than one aspect to every situation in life. The author has done brilliant characterization of Veronika and vividly depicts the depressed emotions and feelings through the character. The author creates a lively demonstration of struggles and pain that a depressed individual has to go through in everyday life with subtle yet substantial situations. "And she was shocked by how quickly she could change her mind, since only moments before she had thought exactly the opposite" (06).

The characterization of the protagonist Veronika is so intense, that it makes the reader to be in oneness with the character's emotions. Veronika is depicted to undergo emotional sufferings of nervousness, anxiety, temperament, uselessness. With each passing day Veronika slips into a dominion of complete darkness. The absence of enthusiasm and positivity is an ensured communication of depression. The

prolonged downcast in emotions and desperate mental image of life necessitates made her to end to her life.

Each human being is unique, each with their own qualities, instincts, forms of pleasure, and desire for adventure. However, society always imposes collective way of behaving, and people never stop to wonder why they should behave like that. One of the substantial characters in the novel *Veronika Decides to Die* is Dr. Igor. Dr. Igor formulates that even factors like climatic condition can have a significant consequence on a patient's mental welfare. Throughout the novel, many characters are rendered to have mental sufferings. One such character is Zedka, who suffers from acute psychological depression. She feels that it is a great deception when the society seems to be happy and comfortable with life. Even the very act of children playing appears unfair to her. She associates her mood with the climatic conditions. Zedka feels the rough and cold weather keeps her emotions and mood at ease.

Eduard, is another interesting character that has a huge significance in the novel. Though Veronika was mystified by his presence in the initial stages, she was completely amazed by his ability to effortlessly play piano despite his depressed mood. Veronika later comes to know that Eduard is a victim of the society's constraint and his parent's demand and pressure. His burning desire to be an artist eventually gets aborted when his parents force him to be a scholar leaving behind all his lunatic wish of becoming an artist. "If you really love us, do as I ask. If you don't love us, then carry on as you are now." (160)

However, in the later stages, Eduard supports Veronika in the unconscious process of self-realization. The female characters in literature are portrayed as an epitome of perfection and sainthood. They have been conditioned to act more

feminine and inferior to men. Nevertheless, with the evolution of time, women characters in literature have been imposed with manlike attributes to empower them. Paulo Coelho breaks these stereotypes in his novels. Peculiarly, Paulo Coelho exhibits the female protagonist as modernistic and strong willed. Unconventionality and independence in thoughts are also the feministic components that are reflected in this novel. However, Paulo Coelho has brought the contrasting features between the two sexes to discern their characters and indicate how feminism has overture.

The author enounces the act of depleting sleeping pills as a feminine sign in the lines “Shooting, jumping off a high building, hanging, none of these options suited her feminine nature. Women, when they kill themselves, choose far more romantic methods-like slashing their wrists or taking an overdose of sleeping pills” (Coelho 06). He describes the act of slashing the wrists or too much dosing of pills to be more amatory way of killing one. This draws a clean conflict between masculine and feministic approach. Through the characters of the novel Paulo Coelho has made a fundamental approach to feminism. Veronika outshines as a bold personality and she doesn’t imitate to standout. Paulo Coelho has made efforts to limelight how the feministic approach can be felt and empathized. “Veronika felt sorry for the woman telling the story, for she seemed to be doing so in an attempt to understand her aunt's death. In a world where everyone struggles to survive whatever the cost, how could one judge those people who decide to die?” (32). It is evident that all the women in the novel are empathetic and could develop a sound rapport. The characters make an attempt to portion out their emotions and find a console and security. Undoubtedly, the women in the writings of Paulo Coelho display feministic and liberal traits. These modern liberalisms and their lucidity in their thoughts are prominent in the lines,

“We're allowed to make a lot of mistakes in our lives, except the mistake that destroy us” (23).

The female characters in the novel are deep, unforgettable and exceptional. The element of feminism also travels in the novel that facilitates Veronika to step out from her confined thoughts and undergo the marvels of life. Undeniably, the author has also created a greater impact by defining significance of feminism in contemporary world. Paulo Coelho has done a remarkable influence in getting the readers understand the values of his contents, just through the exchange of ideas between the characters in his novel. Many wise remarks have been made throughout the novel. Many striking impacts have been made to actualise ‘Love triumphs Wisdom and judgement’ and ‘Feminine judgement is over good and bad.’ Paulo Coelho strongly affirms the component of feminism in numerous ways. He proposes women to act on their will and never to back down by the opinion of others.

Paulo Coelho has done an appreciable speculation in examining Villette to a patriarchal society. The Novel draws a comparison between the women trapped in a patriarchal society to that of inmates confined in Villette. Furthermore, Coelho, has also been successful in comparing Villette to patriarchal society. In the climax of the novel two main characters of the novel Zedka and Mari pull out from the asylum. They slowly relieve themselves from mental agony that has been imposed on them by the society with its rules and dominance. With the developments of characters, Mari and Zedka, who decide to get out of the Villette. They storm out with heightened confidence and revived and rejuvenated mindset to lead a completely different life. This reminds of the feminist utopian dream to free themselves from the society that has been imposed on them.

Self realization is one of the very important and striking themes of the novel. The author, Paulo Coelho has made an attempt to preach and illuminate readers mentally and psychologically. The lead character of the novel, Veronika who is subjected to depression and decides to end her life turns out to be the symbolism of life and its challenges. Rather than thrusting the readers with loaded thoughts, Paulo Coelho has brilliantly inseminated the ideas through gripping characters like Zedka, Veronika and Mari. Through this stunning novel, the author has testified that, with self- realization, one can lead a positive and elucidated life. There was an instance in the novel where Mari helps Veronika to understand her receptiveness to sexuality. This helps her to look and analyse her own self. Veronika reflects her own thoughts and life to discover her inner desires. Furthermore, she follows her heart and goes seeking for love of her life. Her stay in asylum invokes her thirst to be a winner. She provokes warmth and affection for her life. She resurrects back to life by pursuing little things that make her feel blissful, to start with she gets back to play piano. She had always aspired to be one of the finest musicians but she made it to go as her mother disapproved of such fancy ideas. The author, Paulo Coelho symbolizes the act of rekindling to pursue her passion as Symbol of realization and self-assurance. She steps out of all the shackles of self-doubt and the fear of being judged by the society. She decides to be a happy-go-lucky person and to go after the inclination of her heart.

In the last days of her life, she had finally realized her grand dream to play with heart and soul, for as long as she wanted and whenever the mood took her. It doesn't matter to her that audience was a young schizophrenic. He seemed to understand the music, and that was what mattered"(93). The moods and interactions of Veronika through her life have taught her a thing of great significance. The need for self-realization makes her to understand that the worldly life is short lived and

there is no point in confining oneself of all desires. She behaves in a way that the society accept rather than following the heart.

She accepts the way she is and doesn't look for an acknowledgement. She admits that it is alright to be different. She makes sense that it is absolutely fine to express what she feels and doesn't have to feel bothered about what opinion people might carry about her. This simple understanding clears her mind and gives her the confidence to explore her unsatisfied needs. It dawns on her that the mere sentiment to keep satisfying others and lack of attention to own self has stimulated her to self-annihilate. Paulo Coelho further delineates the protagonist's self-realization journey as, stirring up the unconscious mind from the subjugation burdened by the society and other beings.

Initially, the protagonist Veronika confronts an asymmetry in her death instincts and life. She finds it hard to accept the way of life she leads. She finds the whole life existentialistic and caught in a boring loop of events. These suppressed struggles, finally pushes her to a stage of self-annihilation. She exalts death to be poetical, and believes it as the only way to escape such monotonous existentialistic life. The theme of self-realization is seen through the novel with gradual realization of Veronika about the fantasy of life and her recuperation from depression. She frees herself from the self-inflected cage with sexual desire and reliance as powerful keys and towards the end she walks out with confidence and a desire to expend a life like never before.

In *Veronika Decides to Die*, Paulo Coelho portrays four kinds of hegemony in the society in the novel and it affects the characters' life. A person that does not do the acceptable behavior will be isolated from the life of society. Furthermore, hegemony in society in the novel affect the four major characters in the Veronika

Decides to Die. In Veronika's life, she has done something that could not be accepted by the surrounding community and so she tries to commit suicide. She is put into a mental hospital when she failed and survived from her suicide. She is considered to have a mental illness since she has done unacceptable behavior. The old generations assume that Veronika is a mad person. Also, a mental hospital, which is considered as a healing place for a madman, lets it happen although they know that Veronika is not crazy at all. They take advantages from her case to gain more profit. Veronika also has to give up her dream in order to fulfill her mother's wish. Her mother wants Veronika to have a better life than her. This better life is measured by how much money she will have in the future. Veronika felt that her life was empty and her days were boring. She had no desire at all to do those things. The saddest thing, that she had realized is that she is diagnosed that her heart has broken and she will die within a week.

The second character is Eduard. He was sent to Villette by his father since he was considered to suffer schizophrenia. He suffered from the disease because he felt unable to meet the expectation of his parents. Both his parents consider that being a diplomat is the only right path he should take. Then, to get into a diplomat stage, he is required by both his parents and also the school to finish his school as well as he must get high marks in all lessons. Also, they are planning to marry him with someone with a background that can support his career later as a diplomat, although they know that Eduard has a girlfriend in Brazil. His father was trying to influence his own son. He uses his position as a father, where he is more powerful than Eduard as his son. He tried to convince Eduard to do what he really wanted. In the end, he must leave his dream to be a painter to fulfill his parent's expectation.

Mari is the third character who experiences hegemony in her life. She suffered from panic attacks because her inability to reveal what she dreamed to her husband. She also does not dare to take the risk to leave her comfortable job and life. Panic attacks made her unemployed for several months and she was afraid to go out of her house. She thought what she experienced was a strange thing and it was not normal. Then, she considered herself having mental disorder or insanity. She found herself in abnormal situation. This is reinforced by the words of her relative and co-worker at the office who said that she was crazy and had to get a treatment from mental hospital. Her assumption is also reinforced by the doctor who is allow her to stay in hospital even though she did not have any mental illness. It makes Mari continually assume that she has mental illness and has to spend few years just to realize that she is not crazy at all. She also has to suffer from a loss of her husband and her work as a professional lawyer.

The last character is Zedka. She was admitted to a mental hospital for having a depression since she failed on her first love. She gained the hegemony effect from the public who thought that what the mental hospital does to patients is a form of treatment. This community-based trust is utilized by hospitals to get more profit by providing a cheaper and quicker treatment of insulin shock. However, it is very dangerous for the patient's life. Also, the treatment has been banned by the world of medicine but still used by mental hospital. From the result of the analysis, it can be concluded that the society, especially the old generations in the novel, practice ideas unconsciously and without questioning, the older generation do not understand the instincts of younger people and for them people who have mental illness should be isolated from the society. This makes the young generations in the novel very afraid to behave differently. Thus, the concept of insanity in the novel is like propaganda or

ideas that are created to keep the young generation on the line to what the old generations expected to be in the society.

Mysticism is regarded as a kind of ecstasy or altered state of consciousness which is given religious or spiritual meaning, it is beyond one's understanding. It is not accepted by the materialistic society but sometimes mysticism is realized in some way. In our lifetime, erratically, we came across some unknown things that we cannot understand. The present research paper is an attempt to justify mysticism scientifically. Paulo Coelho, who is known for his vast knowledge, tried to prove the existence of something inaccessible that exists in the world. In his novel *Veronika Decides to Die*, the character, Zedka is sketched to be the one who has realized a mystical thing. With the help of the doses given to her, she can enter into a state of coma, and in that condition she can experience an astral journey. An Astral journey, which is known as the most difficult and impossible mystical thing, is experienced by Zedka. Many writers have written about astral journey very few are capable of giving scientific justification to this mysterious thing. An Astral projection refers to 'An out of body experience' in which astral body leaves physical body and travels in an astral plane. Paulo Coelho is successful in justifying mysticism scientifically with the help of such an astral journey.

Chapter Five

Summation

Paulo Coelho in *Veronika Decides to Die* has employed literary devices to convey his philosophical and spiritual themes. In Coelho's use of literary techniques symbolism and magical realism a suitable effort has been made to know about the literature of Latin America and the life and narratives of Coelho. Gregory Cowles writes in The New York Times (2016) about the life of Paulo Coelho succinctly, that he has flirted with death, escaped madness, dallied with drugs, withstood torture, experimented with magic and alchemy, studied philosophy and religion, read voraciously, lost and recovered his faith, and experienced the pain and pleasure of love. In searching for his own place in the world, he has discovered answers for the challenges that everyone faces. He believes that, within ourselves, there is necessary strength to find our own destiny. Paulo Coelho enhances the profundity of his works with rich symbolism and he uses symbols generously to convey the meaning that add more depth to his novels. His symbolism has a myriad of origins as well as forms. Coelho has facilitated the readers to reflect upon their own self and perceive attention to their mental health achieving the result of emancipation and self-fulfillment.

Paulo Coelho, has thrown light on the phylogeny of feminism and their utopian emotions using symbolism of the world and asylum through his poetic style. Paulo Coelho breaks the stereotypes in his novels. Peculiarly, Paulo Coelho exhibits the female protagonist as modernistic and strong willed. Unconventionality and independence in thoughts are also the feministic components that are reflected in the novel. The female characters in the novel are deep, unforgettable and exceptional. The

element of feminism travels in the novel .Undeniably, the author has also created a greater impact by defining significance of feminism in contemporary world.

Paulo Coelho has made a sound impression by stating materialistic comfort is no way guarantees a person's mental well-being. In parallel, he also makes a distinct note on mental health and positivity, presenting example of the lead character in the novel who was subjected to existential crisis finally rages with strong emotion to go after her passion. Many theories of feminism and numerous symbols have been aptly employed throughout the novel that bespeaks feminist theories.

Every individual intends to accomplish own perfection in life. The growth and development of an individual is based on attitude and actions. Human's experience and intellect assist to overcome all kind of sufferings, hardships and obstacles. A tree has been dedicated and enables it to give shadow. Likewise, a man is valued by love and knowledge. Love is a basic need that should be shared with fellow creatures and knowledge is required to understand everything in the world. The ultimate progression of every individual is to understand the greatness of life. To understand the universe, an individual should be aware of self and to attain the social consciousness. Material life and physical fulfilments are not the real progression in the journey of life. It is fact that the worldly pleasures make the mankind go after the material accomplishments. Therefore, the man should go beyond the limit of physical experiments.

Man's body, mind and spirit are more powerful to lead him beyond the material pleasures. Man's greatness is promoted when harmony is established between individual and social beings. His perfection lies in advancing own self. When a man becomes aware of his part in the society, the individual entity evolves in

collaboration with the society. The man comprehends the nature of his individual self when he observes and identifies the relationship between the society and him. In the modern world, man fails to sustain stability between individual and society. Therefore, it is realized that a man should defeat every obstacle along the way he travels throughout life. He also needs to maintain a fruitful connection between the body and mind. Humanity is inherent in every individual's nature. So, the individual should execute a division of his actions with the advancement of consciousness. Sensual bliss destroys the real bliss of humanity. This also leads one towards self-centeredness. The lack of consideration for others causes the crisis in society and by crisis is meant all sorts of crimes and troubles.

Self-realization is one of the important themes in the novel. The author, Paulo Coelho has made an attempt to preach and illuminate readers mentally and psychologically. The lead character of the novel, Veronika who is subjected to depression and decides to end her life turns out to be the symbolism of life and its challenges. Rather than thrusting the readers with loaded thoughts, the author has brilliantly inseminated the ideas through gripping characters like Zedka, Veronika and Mari. Through his stunning novel, the author has testified that self-realization can lead a positive and elucidated life. 'Veronika reflects her own thoughts and life to discover her inner desires. Furthermore, she follows her heart and goes seeking for love of her life which she believes has been a hidden desire leaving her incomplete all along' (135). The author, Paulo Coelho symbolizes the act of rekindling to pursue her passion as symbol of realization and self-assurance. She steps out of all the shackles of self-doubt and the fear of being judged by the society. She decides to be a happy-go-lucky person and to go after the inclination of her hearts want.

The moods and interactions of Veronika all through her life have taught her a thing of great significance, the need for self-realization. She understands that the worldly life is short lived and there is no point in confining oneself of all desires. She does not look for an acknowledgement. She makes sense that it is absolutely fine to express what she feels and doesn't have to feel bothered about what opinion people might carry about her. This simple understanding clears her mind and gives her the confidence to explore her unsatisfied needs. It dawns on her that the mere sentiment to keep satisfying others and lack of attention to own self has stimulated her to self-annihilate. Paulo Coelho further delineates the protagonist's self-realization journey as, stirring up the unconscious mind from the subjugation burdened by the society and other beings. The author takes the reader on a trip, enlightening them; at the end life is a mere fantasy and one should adopt it and lead a fulfilling aliveness following the desires of heart.

The bondage among individual, society and the whole world is created by choices, freedom and moral nature. One who takes a wrong decision and allows to be lured by immorality ruptures the relationship between the society and him. So, man should get rid of the domination of selfishness and restrains. Internal wisdom of accountability is very remarkable to mend the social regulations in order to conserve the universe. Ralph Waldo Emerson states, "Man has a special nature to direct the fellow social beings towards the path of righteousness with the help of consciousness". At first, he needs to follow his inner sense to control his surplus thoughts and actions. The presence of ability to master his selves in man accomplishes the higher thoughts. According to Coelho, when one takes life as a meaningful journey with conscious thoughts, his actions turn into powerful guidelines paving direction to uplift the welfare of the society.

Thus, attaining self-actualization, the characters of Coelho reach the highest pinnacle of their being, a state of enlightenment and eternal ecstasy. After realizing the true essence of their being, the characters of Coelho enjoy their life and live it eternally. Coelho's characters are enriched with love that enchants their hearts, power that emboldens their spirits and illuminates their minds through enlightenment which make them thoroughly spiritual.

Paulo Coelho's works are firmly embedded in the postmodern tradition, both in the form as well as in the philosophy that speak through his novels. Since magical realism represents a crucial component of postmodernism, it is not possible to analyze it without taking postmodernism into account. Paulo Coelho's work encompasses both these approaches. Coelho's magical realism is imbued with determination and hope. He makes much capital out of his international appeal due to the increasing awareness and consciousness towards magical realism. In his novels, the use of magical realism is evident in the way that Coelho combines elements of the supernatural and the realistic, leaving it up to the reader to decide how to compartmentalize those literary devices within the plot. Coelho uses the fantastic element in each of his novels in different ways. Magical devices, some people with long lives and invisible characters are the common fantastic elements in his novels. An unapologetic tone of Coelho is observed when supernatural phenomenon is described as factual in his novels. Coelho blends reality and the supernatural in his own style of magical realism.

Coelho sees life from a different perspective. His approach is unique and authentic by virtue of its being a self-experienced one. He applies the telescopic method of seeing the universal through the personal. According to him, the ultimate goal of every person's physical journey should be the realization of the self, following

the dictum of the heart, and taking the challenge of doing something different. Coelho is one sensitive writer who responds to bringing contemporary issues all over the globe and prescribes the solutions lying latent in each person's own soul. His works are ready reckoners of information of current affairs and general knowledge by means of description of the geography of different places in the world. Above all, the works of Paulo Coelho aim at elevating the readers from the physical plane to the spiritual. Coelho has facilitated the readers to reflect upon their own self and perceive attention to their mental health achieving the result of emancipation and self-fulfillment.

Self-will and liberty can be obtained with virtues. However, man is corrupted by his own will, wrong desires and misguidance. The existence of offence and sufferings are created accidentally against his true nature. The influence of negative force of outer world should be regulated by the individual. When an individual realizes the inherent power of true nature, he should guide the fellow beings. This fundamental guidance lends a helping hand to the whole society. The presence of self-realization in an individual engages in sharing moral nature with the society. These are the things that promote universal brotherhood. Without attaining the awareness of self and the collective bliss, man is not able to lead a peaceful life in the world. Emerson states:

A man is the facade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love. And the blindness of the intellect begins, when it would be something of itself. (3)

These words of Emerson bring to light the qualities of a transcended being. What commenced as a materialistic pursuit in the lives of Coelho and his protagonists gains momentum as their search becomes intense and eventually leads them towards the path of self-realization. When the physical pursuit began, they were absolutely unaware of the true purpose and the spiritual evolution associated with that.

At the initial level, all the protagonists are hardly aware of the true significance of their pursuit which is mostly delineated through a physical journey. The people they come into contact with, the various peculiar experiences they undergo, the multi-layered revelations they obtain, the gradual identification of the self, its evolutionary process, the invaluable wisdom acquired, the power of unconditional and absolute selfless love, the resultant of the self and inevitability of the prevalence of the divine in everything naturally dig out the ignorant and dormant self, to tap on its sources so as to emerge in order to eventually merge in unison and harmony with the kindred universal spirit or phenomenon.

Paulo Coelho, thus helps to understand and reflect the true meaning of life through the character of Veronika. The difficulties, obstacles and hardships faced were battled successfully. Every encounter reveals numerous unknown facts about themselves as well as that of the universe. These inexplicable revelations make the real meaning of life and their physical journey attains the color of a spiritual journey ultimately transforming the personality of the protagonists. Their individual pursuit invigorates and motivates them to overcome their sense of self and leads to a perfect synthesis or amalgamation with the universe.

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**Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You: Or the Portrait of the Artist as a Young Wife* as
an artistic journey of a woman**

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2021

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Intimate Partner Violence	11
Three	Gender Bias	23
Four	Ecriture Feminine	34
Five	Summation	46
	Works Cited	55

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You: Or the Portrait of the Artist as a Young Wife*** as an artistic journey of a woman, submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Carolin D, during the year 2019-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayandhi

Dr. L. Jacqueline Leo

Guide

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Examiner

Principal

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You: Or the Portrait of the Artist as a Young Wife* as an artistic journey of a woman** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

Carolyn D.

April 2021

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PREFACE

Meena Kandasamy's novel *When I Hit You: Or the Portrait of the Artist as a Young Wife* is the survival story of a writer in seclusion. It tells the story of a newly-wed writer experiencing rapid social isolation and extreme violence at her husband's hands. At once a chronicle of an abusive marriage and a celebration of the invisible power of art, *When I Hit You* takes on a traditional wedlock in modern India.

The project entitled **Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You: Or the Portrait of the Artist as a Young Wife* as an artistic journey of a woman** is a smart, fierce and courageous dissection of what love meant, means and will come to mean when trust is undermined by violence.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the biography of Meena Kandasamy featuring the common characteristics of her works, her style and her place in the realm of Indian English Literature.

The second chapter **Intimate Partner Violence** gives a brief overview of the novel *When I Hit You: Or, the Portrait of the Artistic as a Young Wife*.

The third chapter **Gender Bias** highlights the expectations of Patriarchy with that of the modern woman who takes a strong decision to walk out from her abusive marriage after undergoing many violent challenges under her husband.

The fourth chapter **Ecriture Feminine** concentrates on the essence of feminine writing. It emphasizes what language has to do with culture, sex and gender and how it could even be rape resistant.

The fifth chapter sums up all the essential features dealt with in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Seventh Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter one

Introduction

Ilavenil Meena Kandasamy is an Indian poet, fiction writer, translator and activist from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. As a writer, Meena's focus was mainly on caste annihilation, feminism and linguistic identity. A fearless and fiery voice like no other, Meena has dedicated her work, art, and voice towards the annihilation and abolition of the rigid caste system in India. A system that takes away spaces and opportunities from those it considers 'lower' in its hierarchy, casteism is an oppressive tool even today, in almost all walks of life, in the country. Born to parents in an intercaste marriage, Meena grew up learning about the oppression, injustice, and violence that is imposed upon Dalits, Adivasis, and other marginalised communities of India. Her surroundings and experiences, including that of domestic violence in a brief marriage in 2011, fuelled her writing and political identity. From writing collections of poems to prose Meena's work adds to the dialogues surrounding caste, a toxic patriarchal society, and violence against women. A feminist who is fighting oppression with resistance, Meena's voice is relentless and unshakable.

Meena Kandasamy is one of the great voices in Indian Postcolonial literature. As a feminist writer her novels always try to dig the truth of society and throw light on the Postcolonial struggles of woman in the patriarchal Indian society. Among her important works are two collections of poetry *Touch*(2006) and *Ms. Militancy*(2010) and three novels, *The Gypsy Goddess*(2010), *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* (2017), shortlisted for the Women's Prize for fiction 2018 and *Exquisite Cadavers* (2019). This young and

rebellious poet in her works focuses a very strong common thing on caste oppression, women empowerment and psychological pressures of women and women an identity.

Indian writers are lauded globally for their writing, whether it is Rabindranath Tagore for *Gitanjali* or Salman Rushdie for his book *Midnight's Children*. The success of Indian writers has reached such an extent that women writers are also breaking into the field in a major way and making us proud with their wonderful writings. They have been exploring feminine subjectivity and deal with themes that range from childhood to complete womanhood and Meena Kandasamy is one among them.

In the growth and development of Indian English novel, the 1980s occupy a unique position. In the 20th century, women's writing has been considered a powerful medium of modernistic and feminist statements. As feminism continues to fight the war for acceptance in an increasingly patriarchal world, the power of fiction in spreading its message shall not be underestimated.

The feminist movement in India has a long history and has had several offshoots. The space of fiction allows one to create agency, to challenge boundaries and to represent the lived experiences of women. Fiction has the power to make you see, and relate to, things and people you were otherwise blind or indifferent to. Female writers in India have questioned societal norms and dismantled patriarchal binds through their writing. Their writing has not just been limited to the domestic space but has also included sharp political critiques. Writers like Githa Hariharan, Mahasweta Devi, Kamala Markandaya, Bharati Mukherjee, Chitra Banerjee Divakurni, Anita Desai, Manju Kapur, Kiran Desai, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Nair, Kamala Das, Nayantara Sehgal, Meena Kandasamy have also been fierce activists fighting for

women's rights. The writers on this list have boldly written about sexuality, abuse, and have rewritten mythology from the female perspective and carved out their identities in spaces that were traditionally dominated by males.

Colonialism and the concept of patriarchy are inseparable in feminist discourse as it accentuates a relationship between inequality and injustice. Though it seems that the colonial master has vanished from the colonized countries, the impact of colonization is still felt in the form of patriarchy. It is obvious that only men are feasting the fruits of independence whereas women are still subjected to persecution by the male. To eradicate this, the women writers are writing about the predicaments of women in our society. Any relationship is a beautiful bond that connects people to share pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow and success and failure. A strong and healthy relationship assures a person that he /she is not left alone on this earth. Everyone is surrounded by such relationship as marital, parental, siblings and friends. Trust, commitment, adjustment, sacrifice and all the above love is prime pillars of healthy relationship.

Women writers of India are good in analyzing complex issues like complexities of human relationships, man-woman relationship and woman's psyche. Meena Kandasamy's portrayal of women in her novel "When I Hit You" brings out this fact clearly. Women writers are expected to write for women's magazine and be read by women readers only. The issue that matters the most is the conflict between the ideas that society imposes on them of what being a woman. And there is struggle to conform to this image, the guilt when you cannot do that. Their loneliness is deep rooted. Their frustrations are depicted in a realistic way not just to read and throw the book away but to awaken the Indian woman, the Indian society.

Born in 1984 to Tamil parents, both university professors, she developed an early interest in poetry, and later adopted the name Meena. Her maternal grandparents were lower-caste Shudras who fell in love against social norms and left the country for Ethiopia where her mother, Vasantha, was born. They subsequently returned to India. Her father, Kandasamy, born in the nomadic tribe of Andi Pandaram in a tiny village in the Pudukottai District, was the first in his family, and village, to finish school, college, and university. He went on to receive a Ph.D in Tamil literature. He came from a landless family, and was himself of mixed-caste heritage. His father, Karuppiyah was a witch-doctor, and the hereditary professions were fortune-telling and begging. Even today, the words Andi and Pandaram continue to be slur words in Tamil and Malayalam that denote 'beggars'.

Meena's father grew up in an orphanage after his father abandoned the family. Her parents' marriage in 1981 was considered anti-caste (*jaathi maruppu thirumanam*). Her mother worked at IIT Madras for three decades as a faculty of mathematics, a period during which she led a legal battle for the implementation of the reservation policy and for her work to be recognised by a hostile Brahmin academia. Her father taught Tamil for a time at the Madras University. Their involvement in the anti-caste struggle led Meena to work alongside Dalit movements and it influences all her work.

Meena Kandasamy completed a Doctorate of Philosophy in Socio-linguistics from Anna University, Chennai. She began writing poetry at age of 17 and started translating books by Dalit writers and leaders into English. Her first poetry collection, *Touch* was published in August 2006, with a foreword by Kamala Dass. Her poems *Mascara* and *My Lover Speaks of Rape* won first prize in all India Poetry competition. Her poetry is about the female self and body in ways not allowed by this discourse. Given her impassioned politics, it is perhaps not surprising that

she wrote her first love poem only two years after she started writing her ‘angry and militant’ verse. The poems in this edition reveal more than one look forward to more of Kandasamy’s work in the years to come. Her poem *Ms. Militancy* was negatively criticized in *The Hindu*. In an interview with *Sampsonia Way Magazine*, Meena Kandasamy said: “My poetry is naked; my poetry screams in anger, my poetry writhes in pain. My poetry smells of blood, my poetry salutes sacrifice. My poetry speaks for my people”.

The title poem of her anthology *Ms. Militancy* is named after the revolutionary female character of Kannaki in the classic Tamil text *Silapathikaram*. Kannaki, though initially portrayed as a subject of patriarchy in the play, towards the end symbolizes female revolution of such intensity that Kandasamy places her as the epitome of the revolt she seeks to see in the female Dalit persona. She articulates: “Vending vengeance, she made a bomb of her left breast and blew up the blasted city”.

Kandasamy’s poems *Princess-in-exile* and *Traitress* reflect the two very extremes of feminine existence hitherto portrayed, through the characters of Sita and Shurpanakha. In *Random access man*, Kandasamy deconstructs the idea of the “pure” Sita by portraying her as always physically and emotionally deprived by her husband. Her portrayal of Shurpanakha takes the image of women a step ahead. Shurpanakha is said to have been “*Widowed, forsaken, and ordered to exist in erasures*” (1). Having been a lustful woman who wooed Ram and Lakshman, the necessity of having her punished for her desires by patriarchy is reflected by them.

Critics claim to read tinges of ‘hysteria’ in Kandasamy’s poetry. Kandasamy states, “Society will not let angry young women exist, we will be labelled hysterics” (22). Women aren’t allowed to rebel or rage. If they do, they are tagged as hysterical. This fiercely biased view

of patriarchy which has hitherto silenced women from expressing their stark resentment towards prevalent ideologies is challenged by each of Kandasamy's female protagonists in the poems of *Ms. Militancy*.

In many of her poems, time and again, we see her offering the written word or rather poetry as a source of deliverance to Dalit women. In "*Nailed*", her famous line: "Men are afraid of any woman who make poetry / and dangerous Portents" (1-2), we see her trying to propagate feminism through words and the act of writing. Writing comes across as a means of deliverance and protest for her.

‘ Unlike mainstream literature, Dalit literature is dedicated to developing a consciousness among the non-dominant caste people and instigating them to act against their oppressors. Her discontent with the essentialisation of culture and the very project of nationalism ruptures the texture of her poetry. Kandasamy uses her poetry as a means of violent resistance against the nationally ingrained and prevalent system of caste.

Kandasamy's attempt to bring out an alternate version of feminist poetry to give independence to the voices of non-dominant caste women strikes a parallel with the final phase of Gynocriticism. The very notion of the 'body' of the third world woman, especially the underprivileged woman bring it closer to the postulation of the "subaltern" in Spivak's essay *Can the subaltern speak?* (1985). Kandasamy's attempts to dig out the inscribed voices from history and to reread them retrieves the diffusive traces of suffering and pain which are often overshadowed by the facade of empathy shown by the dominant existing socio-political discourse. Meena Kandasamy tries to problematize this camouflaged circulation of power through her intensely inquisitive poetry.

Kandasamy's poetry, in a way, materializes her urge to express and fight for non-dominant caste women: their desires, dreams, independent views and speak for themselves rather than always be spoken for or of by the existing patriarchal social order and their male counterparts. Her poem *Aggression* envisions a possibility of resistance and an ensuing rebellion against the prevalent injustices in society. This spirit of rebellion resonates through the poem:

Ours is a silence
 that waits. Endlessly waits
 ... But sometimes,
 the outward signals
 of inward struggles takes colossal forms
 And the revolution happens because our dreams explode. (1–2,7–10)

She uses the symbol of the vindictive female body as a means of defiance and confrontation against the patriarchal subjugation of women. She proves that the Dalit woman can absolutely speak and when she does, her writing proves to be so scathingly powerful that it comes to formulate itself as an elaborate yet blatant tool of political dissent. This emboldened writing of Meena Kandasamy topples the world of Indian women's writing by setting a distinctly defiant standard in the world of feminist poetics.

Meena Kandasamy's scorching 2014 debut, *Goddess* explored caste, poverty and violence in southern India. Her novel *When I Hit You*, tells the story of a newly-wed writer experiencing rapid social isolation and extreme violence at her husband's hands. To illustrate her point she uses an unnamed narrator speak in an urgent, first-person voice. Kandasamy has written about her own marriage for the Indian magazine Outlook in 2012. *When I Hit You: Or, a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Wife* gives us "a woman at whom society cannot spit or throw

stones, because this me is a she who is made up only of words on a page, and the lines she speaks are those that everyone hears in their own voice”. The memoirist narrative is inspired by Kandasamy’s own former relationship, about which she wrote for an Indian news magazine in 2012. Although the market for confessional essays is booming in the west, in India the appetite for truth is somewhat limited. Given the opportunity to look into the mirror, most people would turn it over. This is especially true when it comes to matters considered foundational to Hindu society gender, caste and class.

Meena Kandasamy’s poems have been published in various anthologies and journals that include *Anthology of Contemporary Indian Poetry*, *The Literature*, *Poetry International Web*, *Muse India*, *Quarterly Literary Review*, *Outlook*, *Tehelka* and *The New Indian Express*. She was also invited to participate in the International Writing Programme at the University of Iowa in 2009 the youngest person from India to represent the country. Two years later, Meena was made the Charles Wallace India Trust Fellow at the University of Kent. She has co-authored a book named *Ayyakali*, a Dalit leader in Kerala. Meena was shortlisted among the 21 short fiction women writers aged less than 40 from South Asia to be New Delhi, the country’s first feminist publishing house.

In addition, Meena edited *The Dalit*, a bi-monthly English Magazine. Her work as the editor of a Dalit magazine and her association with the Dalit Panthers of India, militant activist Dalit organization has further honed her awareness of what it means “to be a woman in a caste-ridden nation”.

A number of Kandasamy’s strident and sardonic essays have focused on topics such as caste annihilation and women’s rights. In her essays she rails against what she calls India’s

“cultural sanction of rape”. She is keen to get things in proportion. “It is more prevalent in Cambodia. And look at a country like South Africa where gang-rape is a kind of initiation tool of male bonding”. However, she agrees that not nearly enough is being done in her own country to end the abuses inflicted upon socially marginalized Dalit women by caste, Hindu men arises “not out of mere reading, but out of active engagement”. Although Meena writes in English, she has translated prose and poetry from Tamil. Speaking about her role as a translator, she says: “I know that there is no limit, no boundary, no specific style guide to poetry that you are free to experiment, that you are free to find your own voice, that you are free to flounder and also free to fail once in a while, because all this happens all the time when you translate”.

Meena Kandasamy is an actor too. She has debuted as an actress in Malayalam film, *Oraalppokkam*. It was the first online crowd funded film. Kandasamy regards her writing as a process of coming to terms with her identity womanliness, Tamilian and low or outcaste”, labels that she wears with pride.

Kandasamy’s novel is more than a fictionalized account of a national tragedy. The book’s grimness is tempered by many of the wry narrator’s writer to reader asides and ‘metaphoric devices’. When we are told the novel in our hands is “Tamil is taste, English on the tongue, free of all poetry and prosody, dished out in dandy prose”, we question the narrator’s reliability, for offsetting the stark and brutal imagery is an abundance of poetic flourishes.

At the beginning of her novel her unvanquished women are strong fighters, at the end they have been punished for their insubordination. She carries on, warming to her theme. “I come from the Tamil culture where sex is treated as the utmost taboo, especially sexual violence you just can’t speak about it. Not only did the landlords carry out this massacre, they also

sexually exploited many millions of these lower-caste and outcast women. And yet we live in a society where you cannot talk about it, where it's taken for granted that your landlord has rights over your body.

No one talks about marital rape in India and it happens to women across social strata". The narrator of *When I Hit You* is an outspoken leftist and poet. A millennial, she craves romance and dissects her sexual liaisons with winningly dry humor. This pursuit is rendered with a poet's cadence. In Meena Kandasamy's Women's prize for Fiction shortlisted novel, a middle class Tamil woman is keen to point out that she has experienced no Western-approved stereotypes of Indian drama: "no incest... no Isis, no jihadi boy friend... no child marriage". Like the author she is poet, journalist and a feminist; the men she knows a politician, students who read Pablo Neruda and Susan Sontag. And the villain of the piece is an educated, cultured brute. "As far left as they came and as orthodox as it was possible to be," he teaches postcolonial and Marxist theory.

Kandasamy's second famous novel *When I Hit You: A Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife* was published in 2017. A year after its publication, the novel ranked second in the Women's Prize for Fiction award in 2018. *When I Hit You: Or, a Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife* (2017) is a biographical fiction that narrates the life of a couple of unnamed characters from different backgrounds. Most of her works are based on feminism and the anti-caste Annihilation movement of the contemporary Indian milieu.

The main thing in the novel is seduced by politics, poetry and an enduring dream of building a better world together, the unnamed narrator falls in love with a university professor. Moving with him to a rain-washed coastal town, she swiftly learns that what for her is a bond of

love is for him a contract of ownership. As he sets about reducing her to his idealized version of an obedient wife, bullying her and devouring her ambition of being a writer in the process, she attempts to push back-a distance he resolves to break with violence and rape. At once the chronicle of an abusive marriage and a celebration of the invisible power of art, *When I Hit You* take on traditional wedlock in modern India.

When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife based on the author's own experiences of marriage is a very of-the-moment story of domestic abuse. After a courtship of man's planning then two weeks of marriage, the husband (none of the central characters have names, just roles) burns himself with matches until she deactivates her Face book account. Marriage cuts off a woman from the main stream of life and pulls back her from achieving her goals. Most marriage is successful only, when the women show major attention to the household affairs. For men it's different. In most families, the man is the boss of the house; wife a counselor or a minister who assists or helps, but not the dictator.

Kandasamy's book questions the very nature of language and storytelling: the different ingrained sexism of Tamil and English; how polite conversation has no way for suffers of abuse to issue "code-red". Near the end, a male friend, having read and account of narrator's marriage in a magazine based in Kandasamy's 2012 article for the Indian magazine Outlook asks if her husband was completely "evil" because "that's how it came across". Even the creation of the character, with its call for complexity and roundness, is hardwired to make it difficult for a sufferer to speak out. Yet Kandasamy has given us 3D, complex experience of abuse, full of roundly explored characters, without compromising the purity of her message.

The book is divided into 14 sections, each introduced by excerpts of the feminist poetry and literature. Therefore, in her defiance of her husband's control, she has not only written her own words but has incorporated the words of great writers alongside her own. And, like the book itself, the excerpts are equally lyrical and shocking. Her use of repetition and lists, such as in her imagined letters to past lovers, transforms her writing into a rebellious call-to-arms or political speech, dramatizing her situation. She also imagines herself in various Hollywood and Bollywood films as a way of distracting herself from her everyday life.

Still in twentieth century and Digital India condition of Indian women's life is made more pathetic by entangling her with enough laws made by patriarchy to sabotage her basic rights of living life with dignity. It is not the story of underprivileged, uneducated and rural women but demolishing dignity and hitting a strong woman like Meena is like a challenge and a conquest to Indian husbands. Various ideological, constitutional and philosophical sources serve as a theoretical framework within which the research work expands and explores the themes of sexual violence by Intimate Partner (IP) in the novel. Besides, this study will throw light on the social stigma, prejudice, internal conflicts, multifaceted strains of sexual abuse on women's body and her suffering soul with a message that, a journey through her fight with the inside and outside forces, upon her consciousness would end up with the conception of selfhood.

Chapter Two

Intimate Partner Violence

Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You: Or, a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Wife* is a deftly edited book on a marriage that reveals the dark sides of ideology-obsessed men. It is a powerful analysis of modern marriage through the art of fiction. Meena Kandasamy has written about her own marriage for the Indian magazine Outlook in 2012. It is a smart, fierce and courageous dissection of what love meant, means and will come to mean when trust is undermined by violence. It is a brilliant, throat-tightening feminist discourse on battered faces and bruised male egos and a scathing portrait of traditional wedlock in modern India.

When I Hit You: Or, a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Wife is the survival story of a writer in seclusion. The nameless narrator is a woman in isolation after her marriage. It is a dazzling and provocative novel of an abusive marriage. This piece of work illustrates how gender-oppressive ideology and behaviour can be kept alive, irrespective of one's education, social class and political leanings. It warns people of how a seemingly "successful" marriage could be violent, oppressive and abusive without anyone around being aware of its brutality.

Using an unnamed narrator speak in an urgent, first-person voice in *When I Hit You: Or, a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Wife* Meena Kandasamy talks about: "a woman at whom society cannot spit or throw stones, because this me is a she who is made up only of words on a page, and the lines she speaks are those that everyone hears in their own voice"(148). The unnamed woman narrator talks about how she fell in love with a professor and married him.

There are four main characters in this novel: the unnamed narrator, the narrator's father, mother and her husband. They don't have name in the novel. When the novel opens the unnamed

protagonist is introduced as one escaped from her abusive husband five years back and the suspense whether she'll survive or be allowed to tell her own story. It is narrated as if the woman's mother has been telling the story to relatives, neighbours, and circles of friends, focusing on the physical signs of her daughter's abuse and escape - her thinning hair, her cracked heels. But the survivor has decided to tell the story herself, which then becomes the novel at hand.

Kandasamy's brilliant and at times brutally funny narrator leads the reader through her emotional journey, from confident college student to a published writer and then to a battered wife. She details the unhappy affairs that led her to take refuge in her husband's arms and then step by step reveals how he managed to isolate her from friends and family, taking control of a joint email account, managing all social activities. Most damning of all, the woman shows how everyone from the woman's parents to her friends and her doctors either looked the other way or urged her to give her husband another chance. This is a story that can happen to anyone in any culture at any period of time.

Seduced by politics, poetry and an enduring dream of building a better world together, the unnamed narrator falls in love with a university professor. Moving with him to a rain-washed coastal town, she swiftly learns that what for her the bond of love is for him a contract of ownership. She is a writer, widely read, has a throbbing intellect and he also seems to have similar thoughts in many things. But after marriage, things unravel slowly, undermining her in every way, by taking away her freedom slowly by inflicting violence and emotionally blackmailing her.

The First few days of marriage has its own charm as she suits her tastes and her dressing style according to his taste. She transforms herself into a blank paper which is ready to be written with new words and commands. Her husband is a man who is kind to strangers but can't extend his kindness to his wife. He frowns upon what he perceives as his wife's vacillating petit bourgeois poet-prostitute-female-writer ways. He finds mistakes with everything that she does. Like any coward, he uses small failures as an excuse to hit her. To manage the situation she satisfies her husband with a 'requisite humility'(19) that make his male mind satisfactory. She becomes the actress, the self-anointed writer and the cinematographer of her role. She was bestowed with a creative freedom when she falls out of her role of a wife. But that's just a temporary escape as the story, the situation and the role change every day, every hour and every time she sits and contemplates.

The communist-professor cum husband who, after marriage has changed himself into a husband-teacher to teach his wife-student, the ways of a typical and obedient wife. A few days into marriage the husband starts to shed his mask of a perfect husband when he burns himself in the kitchen as a preventive measure to get herself out of Facebook. The reason he gives is that he can't go along with the narcissism and exhibitionism of Facebook and says that his wife's 'peep show'(50) will endanger him. In the next ten minutes she cuts off her lifeline to the outside world by deactivating her Facebook account. She commits a temporary "career suicide"(52) and bids farewell to the world with a final message which says that she was busy with a writing project.

Next torture comes in the form of sharing her email password with her husband and arguments follow continued by periodical checking of her mobile phone. He manipulates her into the surrender of her email accounts, the suspension of her Facebook page and he polices even her mobile phone. Robbed of her identity she feels nauseous and robbed of her identity when she

comes to know that her emails have been replied by her husband. As he sets about reducing her to his idealised version of an obedient wife, bullying her and devouring her ambition of being a writer in the process, she attempts to push back a resistance he resolves to break with violence and rape. Then, the demon reached the extent of beating her when she defies him violently rapes her. This bleak violent situation formed part of her daily routine. She pretends to live a writer's life masking her loneliness. So she decides to be open and give up her privacy so that her husband's world can revolve around her. She begins a pattern of obedience which fits well to his personality.

As a result of this she was restricted not to share her phone number with anyone else. Her parents do not realise the collapse of her world as a writer when they come to know this. The justification and denial by her parents further deepens the wounds inflicted on her. She's told it's for her own good and is instructed to be patient. She's advised to have a child to mend the brute. She fights for the rights of an imprisoned wife with silence and when she questions beatings and rapes follow, with everyday middle-class implements weaponised, the hose of the washing machine and the power cord for her laptop. Shame, pride and a society in which everyone from parents to police expects a woman to put up and shut up.

At this juncture, she uses her only advantage as a writer i.e. her language to be free from the confinements. After battling the silence forced upon her, the speaker attains liberation through her fierce use of language which she uses sometimes to play along with the abusive husband in order to avoid possible violence and some other times to provoke him. To cope, to escape, she dons the role of a writer marking plot points from her own abusive marriage. Her words are her only shield of weapons. She slips her words between his ribs like a stiletto knife. When the novel reaches its end the speaker portrays the new role of modern women in the

contemporary society. The novel proves that a once upon a time feminist can get trapped in an abusive marriage and domestic violence. She is informed time and again by her husband that it is her feminism that is the problem and not his abusive behaviour.

A good married life is what every woman dreams of but, it does not happen because, in our culture, usually it is woman who sacrifices more to build a healthy home and family. Family consists of the people who can count on, whom we can share our problems and a feeling of security and oneness. However, Kandasamy reflects how a newly wedded wife experienced the feeling of alienation in her husband's house as her husband controlled all her choices, desire and contradicts her to shatter all her dreams and aspirations.

The novel begins with stripping of the narrator's autonomy after her marriage to a university lecturer, Marxist and a onetime revolutionary in south India who uses communist ideas as a cover for his own sadism. In the beginning of the novel the narrator describes Primrose Villa, her husband's place, as a place of kept secrets, an enclosed space of unheard and unvoiced secrets of her marriage. To escape the after-marriage difficulties she imagines her life to be a film in which she is trapped. She confesses that she has become an actress in real life even before she faces cameras. Her movement restricted within the walls of Primrose Villa becomes her setting to act. The language barrier limits her further to speak only the words of wifely domesticity when she shops for vegetables or buys cleaning products etc.

The journey towards that assertion is a tough one. It began with a stripping of the narrator's autonomy after her marriage to a university lecturer, Marxist and one-time revolutionary in south India who uses communist ideas as a cover for his own sadism. When she moves with him to an unfamiliar city, an assault on her tongue, mind and body begins. The

language barrier ensures that in public she can only speak words of wifely domesticity, shopping for vegetables or cleaning products. Shame, pride and a society in which everyone from parents to police expects a woman to put up and shut up force the realisation that only she can save herself. This is not just a story of survival, but one of self-preservation. For what is turned into record is not the husband's confession of why he hits her, but at the wife's impression of how it hurts: "I am already transferring what I see and experience in the privacy of our home into art," (125) she thinks, "He is becoming the first semblance of a plot" (126).

The evidence of a crumbling marriage can be found on the bodies of the husband and wife: "thin, red welts" on her arms where her laptop cord has lashed her; scorched skin above his ankle after he holds a ladle over the stove and then presses it to his leg until she agrees to see a gynecologist about starting a family; a dull ache where a broomstick has pummeled her back. A smattering of burns like freckles on his elbow where he holds one glowing match after the other, singeing himself until she gives in and deactivates her Facebook account: The slackening of her legs, how she learns to "go limp" when he drags her to their bed to punish, to "tame" her (103).

It would be easy to ask: "What kind of woman would allow that?" Or even: "Why did she stay?" In 2012, when Kandasamy, wrote about her brief, violent marriage for the Indian magazine Outlook, these are the kinds of questions she was asked. *When I Hit You* is her urgent, searing answer. She does not give her readers the sense of certainty a memoir might offer; she is very clear that this is a work of fiction of imagination, not of memory. Unlike a factual testimony, a novel begs no response from her former partner, no corrections from a lawyer, nor queries from a police officer about the finer details of an argument here, a beating there.

In India, where Kandasamy lived with her husband, the National Family Health Survey found that in 2019 over 30 percent of women have been physically, sexually or emotionally abused by their partners at some point. This book is Kandasamy's rebuke to those who think privilege, financial or educational, protects against harm. Her characters are never named their anonymity allows the reader to slip easily.

We are always told when we question the patriarchy of traditional marriages that: "modern marriages are not like" that "love marriages are not like that" Kandasamy breaks this myth. The book reveals a lot on the matters of love. The narrator tells us, "love is not blind; it just looks in the wrong places"(75). The narrator escapes the brutality and the curfew imposed on her by writing letters to imaginary lovers. A woman's sexuality is for her husband to possess. If not wanted by her husband, the woman is supposed to have no wants and sexual desires of her own. The narrator's brutally honest account of marital rape and the way it is used as a weapon against women is numbing. The narrator shares the trauma with her readers by saying that if it is a stranger who rapes her, she could somehow accept and get over the trauma of being a rape victim. But she couldn't accept the rape by her husband with whom she is emotionally bonded with. She shares her pain as follows:

The man who rapes me is not the silhouette in the car park, he is not the masked assaulter, he is not the acquaintance who has spiked my drinks. He is someone who wakes up next to me. He is the husband for whom I make coffee the following morning. He is the husband who can shrug it away and tell me to stop imagining things. He is the husband who can blame his action on unbridled passion the next day, while I hobble from room to room. I begin to learn that there are no screams that are loud enough to make my husband stop. There are no

scream that cannot be silenced by the shock of a tight slap. There is no organic defence that can protect against penetration. He covers himself with enough lubricant to slide past my resistance. My legs go limp. I come apart. (103)

The unnamed narrator says, marital rape is: "...the rape whose aim is to make me understand that my husband can do with my body as he pleases..." (107). Morton Hunt, an American psychologist who first raised the issue of marital rape in his *Legal Rape*, 1979 says, the typical marital rapist is a man who still believes that husbands are supposed to 'rule' their wives. Violence against women still exists in our society, it is deep-rooted and innate consciously or subconsciously and bursting. Behind the closed doors, women are being beaten, tortured and even killed. Men believe their supremacy over women and believe they can take charge over women and their lives. Here starts the game of power play; even women are grown with the thought that men are powerful and can rule them, which is sooner or later accepted by them. However not every woman can accept the violent and abusive marriage especially a woman with feminist ideologies like the unnamed narrator in the novel. To the question, what prevents a woman from walking out of an abusive relationship, the narrator deals with, through a deeply personal narration quickly but poetic:

I learn to criticize myself. [...] I concede that my feminism, with its obsession about sexuality, is a middle-class project that forgets the lived realities of millions of working-class women. In the same breath I also say that I continue to think that working-class women also have sexual desires and need equal rights, and that they need feminism too. (88)

Intimate Partner Violence can be in various forms, which can be physical, verbal, emotional, economic and sexual abuse. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines IPV as: "... behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours." (Intimate Partner Violence, 2017) But, Indian constitution doesn't recognize marital rape and stays silence against it: "Marital rape is a complex problem and only a holistic assessment of the profundity of its origins and the extent of its ramifications can help address the problem." (Kandasamy, Interview: Meena Kandasamy on Writing about Marital Violence, 2017) No serious offence on husband despite of committing the crime of marital rape. It is apparent that Marital Rapes are common not only in rural context and within illiterates but the rate is higher in urban societies.

Meena Kandasamy says, "I believed that no man, no husband could lay a hand on me. I was fierce and feminist and no-nonsense. Then, within an abusive marriage, I actually realized that your strength is also what makes you a perfect target for abuser-Men." (Bhandare, 2017) Meena says, Believe the rape is rape only when it's gory: when your intestines are pulled out. With marriage man becomes master of her body and soul, this misogynistic viewpoint is very sad. And above this any resistance from wife in sexual intercourse is treated as direct threat to his manhood and this situation can even trigger the crisis situation on male ego and his masculinity, and situation gets worse with further resistance and to control the situation they may get violent to solve this crisis.

Presently many societies witness a reallocation of power and independence but at the same time violence against women also increased due to 'Male Backlash' (Faludi, 1991) as they are not able to digest growing gender equality. "Within the evolutionary psychology framework,

a higher male-female sex ratio (more men than women) gives rise to competition among males for female mates. This may lead to sexual jealousy and frustration among men contributing to sexual violence.” (D’Alessio SJ, 2010) When we see an independent and strong woman the very notion that comes into the mind is, she cannot be mistreated but that is absolutely a myth. Kandasamy in an interview admits that stronger the target is which gives higher strength and joy to abuser. To hit a strong woman is like a challenge and every husband want to conquest his wife. For instance, the unnamed narrator’s partner says that her feministic ideology is the problem in their married life and not his violent behaviour. The narrator feels that no matter however she fights, argues and defends, her husband is going to be the one who is going to have an upper hand in their married life. She confesses her insecurity in the following words: “I’m the king, constantly under threat. I’m the king, who can move only one step at any given time. He’s the drama queen. There is no move he cannot make. The board is empty except for us.” (92) “He believes that after him, I will have nothing left in me to love, to make love, to give pleasure.” (108).

The narrative style subtly brings out the Brahmanical and patriarchal values inherent in the institution of marriage; the blame is always placed on women, the need to be submissive for the marriage to ‘work’. When the narrator recounts her conversations with her parents, it is nothing new to us, we have heard this time and again. The author explores various ways of dealing with issues of violence, and how society normalizes the abuse a woman who faces at the hands of her husband. Kandasamy invokes a lot of literary and philosophical inferences from Althusser strangling his wife to Beauvoir and Sartre’s relationship. What Meena Kandasamy writes about in this book is not just the possibility of violence but the inability to get out of it in spite of knowing all well what is happening to.

This book takes us on a journey through structures of toxic masculinity and patriarchy, which allow such violence to be perpetuated: ‘Avoid confrontation’ her father tells her while her mother tells her that: ‘Marriage is a give and take’(96). These token bits of ‘wisdom’ are nothing new to anyone who has contested marriage and its parochial ways of subordinating women. This, as mentioned earlier, is the survival story of a writer in isolation. The narrator uses her words fiercely, sometimes to play along with the abusive husband in order to avoid possible violence, other times to provoke him. Her words are her only shield of weapons. Her novel seems like advice to the readers’ future selves that we are on our own but actually it is a warning: that it is easy for a once upon a time a feminist to get trapped in an abusive marriage.

In one of her interviews Meena Kandasamy says: “the more familiar the strange becomes, the more and more strange the familiar appears. That’s how the once-upon-a-time fiery feminist becomes a battered wife. By observing, but not doing anything. By experiencing, not understanding by recording but not judging.” It is also possible for her to rationalize and try make sense of her abusive partner’s violence like the narrator here says: “He can be kind, I know he can, I’ve seen how tender he is with the homeless boys in town, but with me I know he will always choose to be cruel”(85). She told time and again by her husband that it is her feminism that is the problem and not his abusive behaviour.

The beginning of every chapter is decorated with beautiful quote, with blend of beauty, power and thoughts. The predicament that the heroine faced is enough to make our hearts cry and her acid life which was throwing her again and again in that dark pit. But, still in spite of the dark, gloomy emotional landscape, the prose is beautiful. It flows like a serene river taking us on a beautiful ride, showing us sights and smells and sounds which are beautiful, wonderful and delightful. This clearly reflects the intellectual mind set of Kandasamy.

She has captured the reader's mind by beautifully explaining the landscapes of relationship between men and women, about the depth and inadequacy of language, about the infinite varieties of love, about the relationship between parents children, about communism and capitalism and the grey areas in between how we get used to and normalize violence within our family, about how one would go to any lengths to save a marriage, about silence and speech and how sometimes silence is louder than speech, about the rare words which describe beautiful things which are unique to a particular language and culture.

In a nut shell, the novel showcases the patriarchal mind set of the stereotypes, that they buy rights over someone's rights, respect and existence. They really need to shuffle their mind set, or should be ready for setback, but to harm someone's existence is not their birth right.

Chapter Three

Gender Bias

Gendering is a practice of power, where masculinity is always associated with authority. The socialization of woman renders her with a certain apparently 'inherent' qualities - weakness, feeble-mindedness, patience, sacrifice and so on. Though this disparity is a global issue, it is found incredibly in many parts of India. Patriarchal world believes that women are really inferior to men. But women today have brought a revolution in developments and skills in every renowned spheres of the world. The narrator in *When I Hit You* is one such modern woman who undergoes many different violent challenges under her husband that eventually leads her to take a strong decision to walk out from her abusive marriage.

Meena Kandasamy's novel, *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* very strongly shows the gender bias attitude of the society where a husband exercises sexual superiority, by getting it on demand and through any means possible. The novel gives us a very heart rendering psychological description of what actually goes in the mind of the protagonist. Though she is treated worse than an animal she musters courage to fight against all odds. But she knows better, and launches a fierce fight back, refusing to forget her words, and never her sense of humour. She poignantly writes letters to imaginary lovers: "I write to you because I can." (57) The writing follows a pattern: "Open a file, write a paragraph or a page, erase before lunch." (55) Even as she lays bare her suffocating life in Primrose Villa, where she is trapped, "in the space of three rooms and a veranda" (13) with a husband who takes out belts and other gadgets to punish her, she is not lost for words. So, you have the leaves of a coconut tree

playing: “air piano in the rain”; or the Mangalore rain that: “trespasses into every private sphere”, telling me to run away in every way it can. (65)

The unnamed narrator quickly finds out that her husband is a madman, too clever to commit murder. She would leave but she is reminded that a broken marriage is a cross her entire family will be made to carry: “If you break off your marriage, everyone in town will mock me,” (98) lament her father over the phone. Told by his daughter that her husband rapes her, that he beats her with her belts, electrical cables and power string and that he manages her contact with the outside world, the narrator’s father responds the self-involved grumbling of an Indian patriarch: “A father of a daughter that is a special kind of punishment we pay the price”(98). He urges his daughter to rethink her decision to exit the marriage.

Seduced by politics, poetry and an enduring dream of building a better world together, the unnamed narrator falls in love with a university professor. Moving with him to a rain-washed coastal town, she quickly learns that what for her the bond of love, is for him a contract of ownership. As he sets about reducing her to his idealized version of an obedient wife, oppressing her and destroying her ambition of being a writer in the process, she attempts to push back a struggle to break with violence and rape.

The novel begins in the period after she has escaped her marriage, in recounting the thoughts her mother says to people, it is five years since her daughter left the marriage and the story has changed and transformed into something the mother can more easily digest as she narrates:

So, when she begins to talk about the time that I ran away from my marriage because I was being routinely beaten and it had become unbearable and untenable

for me to keep playing the good Indian wife... she does not talk about the violence, she does not even talk about the actual chain of events that led to my running away...teacher, she also knows that to state the obvious is, in fact, a sure sign of stupidity. When she tells the story of my escape, she talks of my feet. (3)

The way the story begins, hearing the mother's voice with understanding of a situation only after it has happened, introduces the subject with a quantity of irony. It is a lead up to the author introducing herself as the writer that she is, and sharing the lessons she has obtained through his writing project. The husband, a Marxist who considered himself a revolutionary, a comrade using communist intellectual ideas and his activities to raising his self expanding power, dislikes the idea of his wife being a writer, and attitude that pushes her to want to antagonize him. The more he wishes to silence her, the stronger is her will to write, to imagine, creating, to express her. It is a brave and courageous feat for the author to have penned this work and for it to be recognized and appreciated in this way, deservedly so.

Kandasamy admits early in the book that she rushed unto the marriage, describing her parents' encouragement of the relationship due to her husband's profession and her own vulnerability at the time after a recent breakup. Early in the relationship, everything was perfect and he seemed to be a perfect husband material. She admits that she was charmed by his idealistic and dogmatic Communist views, describing him as a 'Communist Crusader' whose language was a 'secret place of pleasure' (105). However, as soon as they married, he gradually forced her into isolation and his language became crude and abusive. He forced her to move to Mangalore, a place where she couldn't speak the language, and to shut down her Face book account, hand over her phone, and eventually she isn't allowed to look at her emails. In his control of all means of communication, he is free to verbally, physically and mentally abuse her

to condemn her to everyone he meets. His violence eventually causes her to: ‘climb into the incredible sadness of silence’(99) her silence being the very thing her husband has demanded all along:

My violence is the counter-violence of the insurgents who are fighting for the rights of the people, the counter violence of the women who blow themselves up to declare their nation’s struggle for self-determination. Your violence is your effort to emasculate me, to live of middle-class luxury, to go on talking about your feminism.’ Yet, when this it only invites further physical abuse, she realizes that she cannot win and must find another way to defend herself. (92)

It is not only her ability to communication that is taken from her but also her autonomy and her voice as she is quickly forbidden to write. Thus, her husband also strips her of her language and herself expression. But her language gives pleasure: “Once this language was something else for me. It was a secret place of pleasure. It was my face in the water, the sudden comfort of far-away laughter.”(105) The book becomes not just a treatise on the experience of domestic abuse but also on the power of language, the written word, and art not only as a form of self expression, but as an important one when it is taken from her. She cannot physically stand up to her husband as he routinely beats and rapes her, but she does exercise her intellectual right to retain her identity and defy her husband.

Marriage has been an overrated institution which makes two people come together and exchange vows for lifetime until death tears them apart: “The institution of marriage creates its own division of labour.”(53) Culturally Indian society views marriage as sacrosanct and ultimate destination for a woman. The patriarchal system demands that the woman should take care of the

husband and his family in order to uphold the honour of her father. She does not enjoy any decision making powers when it comes to her conjugal rights. Everything lies in the hands of man.

There has been much done but superficially and far less has been implemented truthfully. We need to take an initiative to make this world a shared one and an equal one. Throughout the history women have paid the price and are still paying it. Imagine how life will be without this beautiful angel. They are unsafe on the streets and discriminated against at work. At home, they are often worse off: reduced to slavish drudges they are maltreated in hundred different ways. Constantly derided, frequently bullied, sometimes assaulted and occasionally burnt to death.

The title unwittingly or not, reminds us of an illustrious predecessor, James Joyce, and his first novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in which Stephen Dedalus or the writer's literary alter ego, finds words to create his identity and his art, to describe Dublin and her many moods, to defy convention on nationality, language, religion and fly past the 'nets flung at it to hold it back from flight'. However, Meena's unnamed protagonist tries to share her abusive marriage life to her parents. But they try to convince her to stay with her husband. She is instructed not to raise her voice, not to talk back and rather to use silence as a shield. Her father also advises her to be tolerant, patient and not to talk too much with her husband and says: "Marriage is a give and take, Listen to him" (157). Her talks with her parents hold up a mirror to society. We are made acutely aware of a mother's: "unending, unconditional, over conditioned love"(10) for her child and her desperate ways to make a daughter's marriage work. Her mother telling her: "a marriage is not magic"(98) or her father saying:

Hold your tongue. He is your husband, not your enemy. Do not talk back, you can never take back what you said, your word-wounds will never heal, they will remain long after both of you have patched up and made peace'. It takes two to fight. Never in history has anything been solved by constantly talking" Don't you understand? Silence is a golden. (99)

The narrative style subtly brings out the patriarchal values inherent in the institution of marriage; the blame that is always placed on women, the need to be submissive for the marriage to 'work'. When the narrator recounts her conversations with her parents, it is nothing new to us. We have heard this time and again. The author explores various ways of dealing with issues of violence and how society normalizes abuse a woman faces at the hands of her husband. Kandasamy invokes lot of literary and philosophical inferences from strangling his wife to Beauvoir and Sartre's relationship.

In its echo of a canonical title and its shared themes, Kandasamy's novel has much in common with another recent portrait of the writer as a young wife; Gwedolyn Riley's Baileys prize shortlisted "First Love". Though the abuse Riley's heroine suffers is primarily emotional, her husband's verbal attacks on her body, sanity and skills are on a par with those of the abuser in Kandasamy's novel.

The novel becomes a meditation on the art of writing about desire, abuse and trauma. She knows that writing can be her salvation but thus linking herself to feminist writers beyond caste, race or culture, even beyond language difference. It's one way of subverting the argument made by the novel's abuser that the Indian female writer working in English is akin to a Raj-era whore. This is a piece of work which illustrates how gender-oppressive ideology and behaviour

can be perpetuated, irrespective of education, class and political leaning. It warns us how a seemingly “successful” marriage could be violent, oppressive and abusive without anyone around being aware of its brutality: “I am the woman who will not be silenced by the code of sub judice that forbids talk because judgment is pending. I am the woman accused of ultra-feminism”(147). She is told time and again by her husband that it is her feminism that is the problem and not his abusive behaviour. This stark realism has elements of autobiographical element too. Meena has shared her own experiences.

Meena Kandasamy deals with the subject of abuse in a family that is educated and reasonably well to do. Drawing from her own experiences, she tells a tale of a woman in love who wants only love but gets everything but love in the relationship that was to become a nightmare. Telling the tale in third person singular, she tries to get the narrator to distance herself from the events that are happening in the life of the woman and her small family. Try as she might, she doesn’t succeed completely in distancing herself or the woman and the result is a beautifully written book that talks about domestic violence and more importantly marital rape, the two keywords that have most people shuddering or turning away, for the sheer fact that it is taboo to talk about it, much less think about it, and when it happens, it happens to persons we have no knowledge about and have no interest knowing about other than the bare facts that can be used as a tool for gossip, sometimes malicious, sometimes well meant, but gossip and gossip alone.

A very interesting point that the author touches upon in this story is how a woman is alienated from society by abusive husband. While, who are in happy relationships can, easily scorn it, it is only someone who is in an abusive relationship who can understand the perils of being alienated and more importantly the perils of not allowing her man to alienate her from

society. The woman in this story is a writer and therefore has a strong social media presence but all this is taken away with a single decision made by her husband. Almost immediately after marriage the domestic abuse begins. Her husband is a paranoid, sick and manipulative person, harming himself as well as his wife, controlling every aspect of her life, making her a prisoner in her own home and taking away almost all of her freedoms. Her fear was palpable and totally involved in the story a man not only degrading a woman with violence and sexual assault but also trying to erase her identity. This simultaneously acts as a protest cry against the huge latent issue of marital abuse but also functions as a finely crafted into piece of literature. Domestic abuse is something that is too often unnoticed or unseen. Unfortunately, quite often, this is due to the female being too terrified to leave, because they are threatened that there will be consequences therefore, they suffer in silence. Physiological abuse, on some levels, is just as demeaning and life debilitating as physical abuse. There are bruises, but words stick, they are not so fast to fade.

This is a novel about a campaign of total dehumanization and violence enacted against a nameless woman by her husband, a brutal, sadistic rapist. This is obviously powerful in and of itself, but what heightens and elevated to testimony and this does feel like testimony, it's deeply autobiographical is the social consciousness the Kandasamy brings to it, the way she situates domestic violence in the cultural context that enables it. Meena Kandasamy also examines attitudes to women and domestic abuse in India which were shocking and frustrating.

The most tragic part of *When I Hit You* is not just the abuse the narrator suffers, but the acceptance and indifference of society; the masks which her husband is allowed to wear and the masks which she is expected to wear, masks which conceal her anguish and pain beneath a veneer of responsibility particularly. The narrator tells of how she tried to bend herself to her

Communist activist husband's wishes. She echoed his beliefs, deactivated her Face book account, and sidelined her own writing projects. This went from bad to worse rapidly. She was completely isolated. Soon she was being beaten. She was also a victim of marital rape.

The book is about emotional abuse, psychological control, of a woman, by her husband followed by physical battery, including the repeated rape of a wife by the husband. *When I Hit You* is a polemical book. The subject of rape, and specifically marital rape, is a shame which sours modern India, and interestingly given the Maoist influence. Politics also becomes a part of the abuse: "Lonely riverbanks made me weep consolably. Dawn breaking, over pink-and-cement skies, drove me into despair. Political graffiti anguished me"(31). Her husband often punishing her for not conforming to; questioning or a worse making him question his communist views.

Domestic violence is often portrayed as being something that happens predominantly in the working classes. But the unnamed narrator is one from the middle class. The implication often being that anyone suffering at the abusive hands of their partner isn't clever enough, or socially mobile enough, to chance which we all know is utter rubbish. As Kandasamy shows, both in the text and in reality this can happen to anyone regardless of their class, race or intellect. Her parents' attitudes demonstrate wider society's systematic support and justification of abuse and reveal the changes that need to happen regardless of location or culture. In its brutal honesty and very real depiction of an abusive marriage, the book demonstrates the systematic misogyny that exists no matter where you are:

Violence is not something that advertises itself. It is not written on my face- he is too careful of that, of course, aiming his fists at my body. As

long as a woman cannot speak, as long as those to whom she speaks do not listen, the violence is unending. (52)

The book is considered as a high- flying one of the feminist voices of the world today. Throughout the book, the narrator never loses his dignity and even the most horrific events and situations are often conveyed with a touch of humor, demonstrating that she never lost her humanity in the face of dehumanization.

The novel is not just a story of the abuse that the unnamed protagonist faces at the hands of her husband, but also an account of the struggle a young writer faces in absolute isolation. However, the protagonist is able to walk out from the abusive marriage, gaining herself identity as an independent woman who showed to the world that this kind of women do exist and need to exist and proved that husbands are not for financial assistances alone. The novel really holds up a mirror to society from ground level. In an interview to THE WIRE on May 30, 2017, when the author was asked why she chose that dominating subject, she replied: “In tracing the artistic journey of a woman writer, I chose to tell this story of marital violence , that millions of women face and which breaks them down in countless ways.”

Consequently Meena has given the real picture of Indian woman of 21st century and the misleading facts about love marriage and marital rape. The novel reveals that a lot depends on the matters of love. The narrator tells us “love is not blind; it just looks in the wrong places.” The narrator escapes the brutality and the curfews imposed on her by writing letters to imaginary lovers. The book is a meditation on love, marriage, violence and how someone who is a feminist gets trapped in an abusive marriage. Meena Kandasamy’s portrayal of modern love marriage which perpetuates in violence is very exploration of art, love and female desire, which is almost

nonexistent in our cultural discourse. A woman's sexuality is for her husband to possess. If not wanted by her husband, the woman is supposed to have no wants and sexual desires of her own.

Chapter Four

Ecriture Feminine

Ecriture feminine is a term coined by Helene Cixous, in *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1976), meaning literally “feminine writing.” She argues, “woman” has always been in a position of otherness and alterity in Western phallogocentric culture. Using Derrida’s idea of play, however, Cixous notes that “woman” is decentered, and therefore freer to move and create. The idea of “Ecriture feminine” comes from the idea, stemming from Freud, that women are incomprehensible, less moral, less rational than men; Freud calls women “the dark continent,” and Cixous uses that as a metaphor to celebrate the lack of control possible over the position of woman in the phallogocentric Symbolic Order. Feminine writing is associated with the Lacanian Real, with the maternal body, which is barred from the Symbolic Order; she associates representational writing with the Symbolic, and non-representational writing with the female and maternal bodies.

Feminine writing does not belong exclusively to females, however; Cixous argues that anyone can occupy the marginalized position of “woman” within the Symbolic, and write in ecriture feminine from that position. Refusing to define or encode ecriture feminine because to define it would be to limit and imprison it within the logic of Western phallogocentric rationalism. Cixous contradictorily asserts that Ecriture Feminine comes from the female body, and that men can write from that position as well. She describes Ecriture Feminine through a variety of metaphors, including milk, orgasm, honey, and the ocean; she claims that ecriture feminine serves as a disruptive and deconstructive force, shaking the security and stability of the

phallogocentric Symbolic Order, and therefore allowing more play in gender, writing, and sexuality for all language-using subjects.

Écriture Feminine as proposed by Helene Cixous and other post-structural feminists can be characterised with two aspects. The first one is the stylistic picture of women's writing and the second aspect is the inherent nature of the content. The unique form of women's writing is characterised by the unconventional way of cyclic writing making use of puns, silences and strange images. Meena Kandasamy has exploited this non-linear way of expression by writing out her painful experience of marriage life using the very tool that ruined her marriage life: writing. She talks about her mental trauma whenever she is forced to end her writing.

She writes about her writing experience, the way she chooses words, the knowledge she shares on how language is so much to do with culture, sex and gender, the silences and the arguments she make in order to justify her right to write anything she wants: "He spies the irregular lines, the paragraph breaks, the jagged lines that could only belong to a poem" (82).

American Feminist Critic Elaine Showalter defines Écriture Feminine as the inscription of the feminine body and female difference in language and text. Luce Irigaray, a poststructural feminist asserts that only women can be the authentic voice of women's sexuality and language. In a way, many feminists agree to the fact that throughout history, men took the upper hand to comment upon female sexuality. Meena Kandasamy resonates this same idea in her novel. She illustrates the role of language with reference to her female body. She elaborates on how her writing consists of scars, secrets, physical vicissitudes and mental vagaries. She sternly stands for the notion that her writing is solely dependent on herself and is free from anybody's ratification:

My written body opens up only to the extent I decide to demarcate. It does not require the permission of my parents, it does not require the approval of society... I proof it against the prying eye, against inspection. My woman's body, when it is written down, is rape resistant. (239,240)

The very essence of women's writing is not just writing back but writing against what was stereotyped in the name of phallogentric writing. Helene Cixous suggests that the notion of writing is liberation (Al-Mahfedi,2019). *When I hit you: Or, a Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* which is autobiographical in nature narrates the tale of a young wife and writer. She suffers under the tyranny of her own husband who boasts himself as a communist and revolutionary. As a young wife, she is expected to do her duties for the welfare of her husband and as an economically independent woman, she is limited to few job offers which crosses out her passion for writing. The consequences of accepting the fate and rebelling against her husband complete the rest of the story.

Teaching post-colonialism to escape the loneliness she realises that the empire never writes back because within the classrooms the oppressed are still the products of the same empire, carrying their bags of shame and sin. When she discusses this with her communist husband his interpretation is different. He says in the past the 'whores' are the links between the coloniser and the colonised but today the writer who writes in English, who is the link, the bridge is the 'whore'. She is stopped from preparing her articles saying that she is not allowed to be a writer-whore. He stresses on that he owns her and she has to follow his wishes. Her current situation makes her hesitate even to make a call for the fear of being discovered midway.

Reduced to nothing the writer who gave up the job of a teacher to be a writer is now reduced to a position where she has nothing else to do. She is a writer just in front of the mirror

as she has more important duties than writing (i.e.) household chores. Fear engulfs her as she finds herself incapable of writing even a single word. She compares herself to the women in the novels that are stronger than her and she feels ashamed. She finds an outlet for her thoughts by writing poetry. She buries her anger in words. According to her husband she imprisons their differences within a poem which becomes a poison and creates trouble for their future. But to her, it is the ointment which heals her and through which she can get over her problems of domestic oppression. He even finds differences between him writing poems and the poems written by her. He says that his poem struggles to move past his weaknesses and her poems are fuelled by hatred. So he becomes the poet of a marriage in which she is brutally beaten: “The institution of marriage creates its own division of labour” (84) and the divider is the husband.

She starts writing letters to imaginary lovers and was gifted with slaps for writing poems which marks her cheeks with painful memories. In order to escape the present hellish world of slaps, hits and torture by questions she starts writing letters to imaginary lovers to whom she discloses all her feelings and her unanswered questions. She gets the sheer pleasure of writing without his knowledge when she writes the letters even though they are temporary: “She gets revenge by writing to the word lover again and again” and rubbing salt on his wounded pride which reclaims her: ‘right to write’ (88). The words in the letters give wings to her lone injured self. It heals her and fills her with courage and makes her fly with word-wings.

Language shapes her worldview and the worldview shapes her languages. It makes her a prisoner. In Mangalore, Kannada language makes her a mere housewife oppressing her other self. Whereas English makes her a lover, a beloved and a poet and Tamil makes her a word huntress and a lover of Goddess. Whatever language is used by her husband to insult her, it always retains its charms. The wife swings on the pendulum of choice. One moment she is alive

and another moment she is dead. She is kind of a living that feels dead. She transcribes her memories of love using her long forgotten words which makes her feel safe and loved. She indulges in the thought-crime, in the words of her husband, and never feels guilty.

Her image as a wife and a writer is converted into a battered wife who erases her memories as a writer when the evening stalks her doorstep. She functions as a writer only when she has a brief snatch of time in the make-believe situation of happy marriage. In the field of marriage the only place where she has her upper hand is the area of kitchen where she cannot be insulted or overcome by his hurtful words. In her tiny world called kitchen, the food overshadows the domestic insults and abuses. She becomes a part of the structure of a so called happy marriage which has its own forms and functions. She becomes like the peg on the clothesline, the gem clip on the table, the woman in the kitchen who transforms into the submissive between the sheets. The following lines make her to keep count of her days' routine:

Three four

Sweep the floor

Three four

Do the chore

Three four

Come here whore. (137)

One fine day the husband sets the wife completely free by deleting all her emails erasing everything from her past. That's how a once upon a time feminist becomes a battered wife. The history of her past is gone forever which leaves her in a blank state; a state of nothingness. The

narrator's only escape from the brutality and the curfews imposed on her is by writing letters. Though the narrator is a feminist she gets trapped in an abusive marriage. At one point of time she is forced to climb the incredible sadness of silence. She conceals all her shame within the folds of her sari and censors her conversation by staying silent. She erases her individuality completely and punishes herself by staying silent when the words flood her with their presence and refuses to dislodge themselves from her tongue. She never understood violence until it happened to her. She never understood that sex is disgusting and painful until she was raped by her husband.

Marital rape was a concept of savagery, of violence of violation and of disrespect. It revealed her that she was involved in a marital game of chess where she plays the King who was under constant threat by her husband who plays the role of drama Queen. She realises the sickness of a man's mind which allows him to take a woman for granted, after marriage. She understands the unwritten male supporting marital rule that a woman belongs to him after marriage and he is the owner and he has the right to do anything to her. She has no rights to talk or to say no for which she is punished in an instinctive, animalistic manner. The husband speaks in his brutal language which makes the woman physically mute. Her scream never reaches his ears to make him stop. She feels like a corpse which is devoid of all the senses when it is fed with rice. The husband uses rape as a weapon to tame her. It becomes a fight which makes it difficult for the woman to win. Her husband tries to control her body, but he will never control her mind.

The narrator cringes when she realises how well language is used by men to insult women. She feels disgusted that her body is used as a spittoon where the repellent words are spat out hot from a man's mouth. She tries to reconcile her world with the linguistic theory she learnt:

“It was your tongue in your mouth that forced me into silence. It was your tongue in your mouth that forced me into submission. And then, it was your tongue in your mouth that forced me”(173).

The husband aims to fill her womb by forcing himself on her, but she bravely decides to keep the place of peace, the womb, empty. She transfers the emptiness of her life to her womb and doesn't want to carry a man's child who beat her, raped her on a bed where a 'no' held no meaning and called her a whore. She uses her skills in the kitchen to secure her womb's liberty. So she begins a plot to escape. She becomes what he wants her to be: the good housewife. She cooks food that pleases him. She allows him sex when he wants it. She wears the clothes that he wants her to. She learns Kannada, as her husband does not speak the language of love. She also begins to use language to conquer his venomous masculinity. Since the writer in her is stronger than the woman, she begins her act with pity when he opens up about a comrade from his revolutionary days. She makes him fall apart emotionally, starts taking notes of his weaknesses and plays with him. She becomes a strategist and lets her writer self take in charge. She controls the narrative as she realises the basic notion of a writer.

Their brief existence of her temporary letters powers her mounting defiance. This power leads her to strip his manhood away when she explodes him with her word bombs that real men never hit women. She makes him impotent of acting on his threats and creates the space she always wanted. She becomes deaf to his detestable calling names and for the first time in her life after marriage, she pierces his male ego with her word daggers. She is not afraid of the consequences of talking which brings the end of her marital life with the man who has been rendered as a husband by the society. She takes everything that has been stripped off her by him-

Passport, ATM, laptop, phone and most importantly her freedom. She leaves the miserable city at night shedding it like a second skin.

She transforms into an anti-fragile and unbreakable woman who is not afraid of men. She faces the disbelief, the shock and the shame from her kith and kin post marriage. She restores her courage and lost habits acting alongside like a black widow. Finally, she enters the world of books; the world which welcomes her with willingness; the world created by her in words; the world where she burrows word-tunnels to bury herself. She begins her writing career by writing a postmortem analysis of her marriage for a magazine. She is astounded when she receives written statements from thousands of women all around the world saying that her pieces of writings reflect their stories, their voices and their tears. She slowly climbs up the ladder of life and wakes up to social media picking every single thread of her life. She turns to the police, to the lawyers, files for divorce and answers the people who want a balanced picture of her past marital life. She starts meeting different people. She matures enough to understand everything and everyone; the difficulty of being a woman; a writer; of getting into an arranged marriage; of walking out of the marriage; of hearing the judgements of the judgemental people and not caring about them. Even after walking out of the marriage, forgetting everything seems a forlorn, unattainable dream. She is still caught in the web of bad marriage as she and her parents face the questions posed by the society post marriage. But still she likes the peaceful niceness of life sans domestic violence and the chokehold of marriage. She begins the process of forgetting and healing and indulges herself with her world made up of words, sentences and books.

She makes up a beautiful world with the dimension of her language and hides her pain. She hides her scars behind her neatness in dressing. She hides her real worn out physical self behind the body she makes up with words which is perfect and invincible, devoid of any scars.

It's completely under her control. She wraps her body with words which is protected against the prying eye, against inspection and against the hands of others. Most importantly the written body is rape resistant. Her fingers capture poetry and song, music and dance and she hides the roughness of the girl's fingers spoiled by housework, behind words which trace butterflies in the air. Words allow her escape the real and cruel world; words give birth to another woman; the woman who was hidden inside the wife. Though she left his world she never forgot his words which buried a part of her soul. With the help of words she creates the woman at whom the society cannot spit or throw stones because she is completely made only of words on a page and her speech is heard by everyone in their own voice. Words released the strange, rebellious and ecstatic woman hidden inside her. Words gave her wings to fly at her will and smuggled her out of the oppressive situation, a situation where she struggled so hard and so long to wriggle out of the problems and found shelter within the words which gave her wings and courage to fly. She conjured a brave self out of words to take on the life of a woman afraid of facing her own reality.

The unnamed first person narrator of the novel talks about her childhood where she was exposed to the world of literature and revolution. She identifies herself as belonging to the broad left as a writer. She begins her career as a freelancer. While she complains about her daily routines as wife, she enjoys the moments when she gets obsessed to write something after her husband's departure. To her, "The poem is the healing" (82).

Throughout the novel, she is waiting to write every time. These instances unravel her constant urge to write. The newly married wife experiences a lot of changes in her husband after marriage in terms of principles. He elaborates on Communism and Marxism to her wife but fails to stick to their principles. On the other hand, he curbs her privacy and freedom. He compels her

to deactivate her face book account which seems to be his first step to block her from communicating to the external world as a writer.

Later, the password of her mail is replaced and all her mails are deleted in the name of new beginnings. These constraints put her status of being a writer at risk. In addition to these restrictions, she is subjected to verbal insults for holding a passion for writing: “Being a writer invites constant ridicule from my husband”(74). Once, she is asked to write an article on sexuality in a magazine and she shares this with her husband. They are on their trip. He mocks at her and brands her as a slave of the corporate media:

You are selling your body. This is elite prostitution, where men do not get to touch you, but they masturbate to the image of the woman you represent. This is not freedom. This is sexual anarchy. This is not revolutionary. This is pandering to vulgar imperialist culture. (76)

These statements from the husband are so typical of what Cixous mentioned in her essay as phallogentric tradition that which denies women who speak or write of their sexuality. She treats writing as the only way to replace this phallogentric representation of a woman and her writing. Thus, he stops her wife to proceed with her writing work reminding her that she is not only a writer but also his wife. Yet, the wife could not resist her desire to write. She takes a lot of risks and mails the article in spite of insufficient facilities. She gets a good response and derives pleasure in doing something against her husband.

The more her husband hates her pursuit of writing, the more she feels: “a sense of reverence towards the job of being a writer” (80). The wife finds poetry easier but it disturbs her husband extremely that he argues with her. He requests her to cease writing poetry since it

reveals the agony she faces by marrying him. He is so particular about his image in her poem and advises her not to immortalise a short lived emotion. All these observations are invalid when he writes poetry. He justifies that there is a difference between her poems that blame him and his poems that blame himself. The latter gives an image of a guilty husband who can be sympathised by the readers. Also, it gives a chance for the husband to move past his weaknesses.

Gradually, the wife finds pleasure in writing something unnoticed by her husband. She exploits her break hours to write a page and delete them. She writes letters to her imaginary lovers and obtains her right and space to write. She takes pride in her defiance and spite. But every day she was abused in alternate ways. He makes violence as his tool to chastise his wife on account of his suspicion. She is whipped, beaten and raped. She never falls back but stands against him only to yield to his verbal expressions and physical torments.

He confines her life and mind within a term depression: "Depression is a career choice for you. Without that, you are nothing"(151). After being threatened to death, she speaks the words of her mind right to the face of her husband which puts him to shame. She is freed of her imprisonment. Later, she writes an article about her failed marriage which touches hundreds of women who could relate with her struggles as a wife a writer. The end of the book quotes her husband's words about her which finds fault with her to see everything as a writing material: "You're only after a story" (241). This implicates how she was never made to feel comfortable to write in his presence. The main reason why the husband stops her from writing is the way in which she writes about her past in the present and the number of times she used the word lover. Yet, the writer does not give up to the extent that she pledges to pen down all these incidents in

the future. She affirms that her husband can delete mails but cannot delete what her heart feels: “If the material does not exist, does the memory go away as well?” (88).

Writing emancipates women from the world of pain and the condition she is forced to live in. Women who take up writing do not adhere to the existing conventions but free themselves from those traps and prefer a new and different path of writing. Meena Kandasamy, as the author of the novel and as a character in the novel, pictures how writing is a forbidden job for any woman, how writing tickles the ego of a man, how writing can give her the sense of freedom and how writing makes her win. She has perfectly represented the growth of a female writer against the hurdles of male domination and societal norms. As a result, her unyielding passion for writing makes her the evidence for the process and product of women’s writing.

Chapter Five

Summation

Meena Kandasamy had used the technique of streams of consciousness in the book. This technique was firstly used by James Joyce. Meena Kandasamy had also followed Joyce's work '*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*' and chooses the subtitle '*A Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife*'.

When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife late in 2017, most were stunned by the novel, obviously by the subject, a woman writing about the experience of domestic violence and abuse, herself a victim of it within marriage; but also the analysis of her response to what was happening. This was a highly educated, intelligent and articulate young woman writing. It nudged preconceived ideas about victims of domestic abuse.

Kandasamy's book is a powerful analysis of 'modern' marriage through the art of fiction. An unnamed narrator takes us into her world of a misogynist husband; a father embarrassed by the shame that a possible divorce would bring, and mother who tells her this is how things are, to be silent and to accept the situation because the first year of marriage is always hard; a mother who makes a "spectacle" of the narrator's embarrassment and advises her that time will pass and all her troubles will be forgotten.

The book begins and ends in frenzy as it should. The first few outlines of the story are narrated by the parents of the narrator, a young, badgered wife who has just managed to escape her tormentor. The last three or four chapters, coming as an afterword again goes into the frenzy of that great escape, as if the narrator cannot believe that she has actually escaped the horror. Kandasamy tells the story of a highly educated Indian woman from a well-to-do family who

marries a man who keeps the outward appearance of a respected college professor and social activist, while at home, he increasingly isolates and torturing his wife. As the violence spirals out of control, the beatings become more and more vicious, the insults turn into threats, and the wife gets physically affected regularly.

A crucial aspect this book brings out is the way violence perpetuates in a seemingly “modern”, “love” marriage. The book reveals a lot in the matters of love. The narrator tells us: “love is not blind; it just looks in the wrong places”(75). The narrator escapes the brutality and the curfews imposed on her by writing letters to imaginary lovers. The book is a meditation on love, marriage, violence and how someone who is a feminist gets trapped in an abusive marriage.

When I Hit You is a story told in the first person. The unnamed woman narrator talks about how she fell in love with a professor and married him. She is a writer, is widely read, has a deep and wide intellect, and has leftish leaning. He seems to have similar thoughts to hers in many things. But after they get married, things unravel slowly. He undermines her in every way, takes away her freedom slowly, first in small ways, by inflicting violence on himself and emotionally blackmailing her and then in big ways. Then he starts beating her when she defies him and violently rapes her. This book reads too raw, she is too fierce. Almost no men, no women are portrayed sympathetically; her own parents are shown in negatively except toward the end where she thanks them for supporting her, but before that she only shows them as stereotypical Indian parents with the kind of disdain that the privileged have toward the marginalized, that the superior West toward the rest. The book also gives the impression that all Indians are stuck in bad marriages as if marriage is some sort of ‘burkha’ that a ruthless man put on a woman.

It produces a certain kinds of narrative that subsumes all difference, other potentialities, and other lived realities. The space that Meena inhabits, the words she deploys, the way she sees life, the way she is, are the very markers that put her on equal terms with her husband. She is not a subaltern woman; she is the woman who fights back. She has every resource, advantage that makes man and a man in India. She has an access to the space like her husband.

It is quiet ironic, rather sad, to see how her husband demean. He accuses her of using her ‘cunt’ to get writing assignments. Elsewhere in the book, the wife in the book, in her haste to be critical of men, speaks in similar terms to describe women who work with men without conflicts. In one situation, she is at the receiving end of the narrative that gnaws her very person: but in another context. She herself deploys the same narrative on others, seemingly less privileged and socially inferior to her. In terms of language, in the first half of the book, there was some trite expression for instance, “we ate silence”. On many occasions, while reading even knew the words that might appear next. The second half of the book is brilliant; her language feels real, heartfelt and forceful. Toward the end of the book, she writes about men and herself in an excellent prose; the poet in her comes out with full force. Reading these last pages, I understood her better in the other words, whereas the first half of the book has conflicting elements, too many accusations, too much anger. It shames, demonizes the oppressor. Whatever, whoever that is. However, the second half narrative voice seems real as it comes from the depth of experience, not clouded by righteousness. The reader feels its healing impact. The words are used in this book is powerful, unflinching, raw and all sounds cliché, but they are all true.

This is not the faint of heart; the book is in fact of paragraphs like the once cited above. Kandasamy paints a gruesome picture that vividly explains why the wife stays with her husband, what strategies he employs to keep her under his control, the emotions she experiences, and the

role of her own family and Indian society at large. By that, the book successfully exposes the power dynamics that allow violence against women to happen, and although this is a book specifically about India, many aspects also apply to other societies.

Meena Kandasamy is clearly an intellectual heavyweight, but she wears her intellect lightly on her sleeve. She takes the reader by their hand, shows them the landscape, explaining things like our favorite teacher or our mother would, about the relationship between men and women, about the depth and inadequacy of language, about the infinite varieties of love, about the relationship between parents and children, about communism and capitalism and the grey areas in between, how one would go to any lengths to save a marriage, about silence and speech and how sometimes silence is louder than speech, about the rare words which describe beautiful things which are unique to particular language and culture. Meena Kandasamy talks about these and other fascinating themes, topics, questions. Sometimes she gently takes us deeper into a topic and it happens so quietly that we don't even realize it till we notice that we are in the middle of the intellectual ocean, swimming, and thinking complex thoughts.

Aspirations and dreams are not always fulfilled, marriages are not always successful and the fairy tale romantic setting does not always consummate this is harsh reality that comes out in Meena Kandasamy's novel: *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife*. In the contemporary scenario we talk about eco feminism, radical feminism and eco centrism. Indian women writers have voiced their concerns from last five decades against a number of atrocities and gender inequalities that have meted out to them. For an ordinary Indian woman "marriage" means happiness galore because ironically marriage is regarded as sacrosanct and union of two families rather than two persons. Indian woman feels that sexually satisfying her husband is one of the vows that she has taken at the time of her marriage. Man on the other hand

does not feel the same way for him it is a man's world and he needs to be aggressive in all spheres of life.

Kandasamy's prose is imaginative and playful. When it is not describing, with decision, the ramping tension in moments of action, it plays with poetic forms and structures to tell the story through letters or phone calls. It is prose which suits the circumstances of a narrator who must escape down avenues in her mind. She is at pains towards the end of the work to make clear a necessary distance.

The prose is elegant but also tight there are no rambling passages, no superfluous sentence, and no wasted word. It is brilliant. This book made me think of all women who were suffered in marriage, most of them silently, many of them withstanding emotional violence, some of them physical and sexual violence. Women would consider as mom, like Nora: "*The Doll's House*" and countless others that I read about it. This book might open some old wounds if one has seen or experienced something similar. It is not for the faint-hearted. Kandasamy's language is very vivid and she writes with poetic intensity. The novel grips the imagination of the readers.

In her novel writes hard hitting account of a writer's marriage in an effort to lift the veil of the silence that surrounds domestic violence and marital rape in modern India. She address compelling questions in her lyrical style of writing that is poetic and draws into its prose. At no point in the book is the narrator, or her abuser, identified by name. The author has acknowledged that the story draws from her personal experiences but she has also fictionalized it by not giving the protagonist a name, it is no more the story of one person. Instead, it becomes a universal story; one that woman anywhere in the world can relate to *When I Hit You* is seething

with sage. It is pain full and divesting. It is also powerful, courageous and inspiring. It is a lesson of the signs it should be identified. Of being the woman not the world wants you to be, but what you want to become. It is a lesson to not let your loyalty become slavery. Any relationship, when becomes overbearing, needs to be terminated. One always needs to remember that one can always get out.

As a novel, it isn't successful. There's not a lot of character development. There isn't much of a story are. There is a lot of explanation, especially in the denouement. There is not even much dramatic tension. His abuse is going to escalate, but that she survived to write this book. She even talks about writing and publishing an essay about her marriage, which she clearly expanded into this book. But it was bothered most by Meena Kandasamy's obvious expectation that the reader accept this book as a true story. In a novel, this approach comes across as defensive.

Some writers write for an international audience, hoping to impress British and American readers and literary prize judges. Then some of the writers books on contemporary themes which capture the imagination of the young, modern, urban Indian, like the campus novel or the office romance. Some writers interpret mythology in contemporary ways and make it engaging for the young audience. There are American, British, French, German, Spanish and Japanese novels on many of these themes. But they are rare and nonexistent English novel written by Indian writers.

Another important aspect of Kandasamy's book is that she is very political and often refers to the common phenomenon that a system of thought that maintains to fight for equality is used to oppress other people, in this case women. The husband in this story claims to be a

devoted communist and decides his wife as “bourgeois” and a “bad comrade” whenever she behaves in a way that he does not agree with. While pretending to fight for the rights of oppressed workers, he oppresses beats and rapes his wife; while condemning the dehumanizing consequences of the capitalist system, he tries to take away his wife’s individuality; while declaring his aim to free the ailing poor, he incarcerates his wife. His “communism” is a charade, a tool to put him in the right, a cover-up for his twisted personality, and it remains unclear whether he himself buys into his obscure arguments.

The uses of ideology or perversion of system of thought happens quite frequently and in different contexts, but to read Kandasamy’s description of the incarnations of this phenomenon in India is fascinating, the reasons that become apparent when reading her book. Kandasamy is reluctant to expand publicly on her own case of domestic abuse, except to say she divorced her husband and moved on. The author has since become a powerful activist for feminist issues and the anti caste movement. The title is fierce and the writing while beautifully poetic and darkly humorous is also uncompromising and raw.

The subtitle would suggest, this book is not just one about domestic violence, it’s also about the act of writing itself and the way that fiction and stories can help to escape. The narrator thinks during an episode of violence from her husband that: “ I just have to wait for this to end and I can write again”(55). The instruments of fiction allow an escape from the abuse which is such a relatable impulse, and a really interesting one. Kandasamy is so eloquent about the way that writing her own story and crafting a narrative is an empowering and sometimes life-saving tool with young wife talking about her impulse to survive as her: “restless urge to tell a story.” (51) This desperate wish propels her out of the pain, and offers her a balm.

When I Hit You is the book about the physical and psychological claustrophobia of domestic abuse and it is set in a small town in coastal India, or rather the three rooms of the house of the narrator rarely leaves. It details physical abuse which worsens over time, from fantastical threats of guerrilla-inspired violence to eventual graphic rape, directed from a man who considers himself a revolutionary towards the new wife he met in a Face book protest even page. Their relationship, at first, is based in a shared interest in radical politics, and finds its foothold in debates on Marxist, Maoist, and Leninist theory. Once in the domestic scene, this interest turns swiftly hierarchical. It is used against the young wife, who remarks her husband brings twelve angry men to bed with him: Hegel.

The narrator feels deeply intimate, allowing the reader in to a mental Wister set within the second chamber of domestic goal, while expounding upon universal themes. The vivacity of Kandasamy's style is gripping. She describes the novel accurately as: "at once intellectual and theoretical as well as personal intimate", taking inspiration, from writers of fragmentary texts such as Maggie Nelson.

When I Hit You is a modern feminist book from a non-western perspective, and I'd commend it to anyone who, like me, could be doing with reading more widely in their feminism. It elucidates attempts to wit fully and forcefully erode a woman's freedom; and shines a light on the hypocrisy of political theory within domestic spaces. It is excellent on the subject of art as salvation, especially for woman writers, and those who face resistance to work they consider essential to their sense of self and purpose. Beneath the plain paper cover is alive with hope, eroticism, and iron will and a love of art, to the very end. The novel and the narrator had a good and bad opinion. The writer's style is unique and maybe she conveys her message sometimes wrong. But at last I conclude my point that all the women know about how to achieve

themselves without others help is clearly shown by Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You*. It is an incredible work of creativity, working through the post – trauma of domestic violence.

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Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*: A Feminist Reading

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

By

HEMA LATHA.S

(REG. NO. 19APEN11)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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Contents

Certificate

Declaration

Acknowledgement

Preface

Chapter	Title	Page No.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Fight for Freedom	12
Three	Quest for Identity	22
Four	Woman: A Multifaceted Personality	32
Five	Summation	42
	Works Cited	52

Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters: A Feminist Reading*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by HEMA LATHA.S during the year 2019-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*: A Feminist Reading** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

April 2021

HEMA LATHA S.

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Preface

Manju Kapur is one of the feminist novelists of the twentieth century who threw light on the struggles of women under the patriarchal system that subjugated women in all areas of life.

The first chapter **Introduction** discusses about Indian English Literature, which paved way for feminist writers. It also details about Manju Kapur's life and her powerful depiction of female protagonists in her novels.

The second chapter **Fight for Freedom** deals with the chief concern in the novel *Difficult Daughters*, tracing women's fight for freedom even inside their family that misunderstands them to be rebellious.

The third chapter **Quest for Identity** highlights the protagonist's search for identity. It discusses how the protagonist is determined enough to achieve her aim even if the obstacles cloud her life.

The fourth chapter **Woman: A Multifaceted Personality** focuses on the author's technique of implementing the versatile nature of women under different circumstances of life.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and shows how Kapur paves way for the subjugated

women to fight for their identity and the importance of education in women life.

The researcher has followed the guidelines described by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

In the twentieth century, several Indian writers have treated themselves not only in traditional Indian languages but also in English, a language inherited from the British. As a result of British colonisation, India has developed its own unique dialect of English known as Indian English. Indian English typically follows British spelling and pronunciation as opposed to American, and books published in India reflect this fact. Indian Writing in English, is the body of work by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. Its early history began with the works of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio and Michael Madhusudan Dutt followed by Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao contributed to the growth and popularity of Indian English fiction in the 1930s. The collection of Indian English literature holds a wide variety of themes and ideologies, from the late eighteenth-century to the present day.

The non-fictional body of prose-works, consisting of letters, diaries, political publications, articles, speeches, philosophical works etc., in Indian English literature of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, is rich and varied. The speeches of Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Chittaranjan Das, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and Subhash Chandra Bose, shaped the destiny of modern India and also the destiny of English language in India. Gandhi's *Indian Home Rule* or *Hind Swaraj* (1910) was written in an occurring variety of the English language and challenged successfully the domination of standard English even before R. K. Narayan, M. R. Anand and Raja Rao.

Raja Rao (1908–2006), the Indian philosopher and writer, authored *Kanthapura* and *The Serpent and the Rope*, which are Indian in terms of their storytelling qualities. Kisari Mohan Ganguli translated the *Mahabharata* into English, the only time the epic has ever been translated in its entirety into European language. Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) wrote in Bengali and English and was responsible for the translations of his own work into English. Dhan Gopal Mukerji (1890–1936) was the first Indian author to win a literary award in the United States. Nirad C. Chaudhuri (1897–1999), a writer of non-fiction, is best known for his *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951), in which he relates his life experiences and influences. P. Lal (1929–2010), a poet, translator, publisher and essayist, founded a press in the 1950s for *Indian English Writing, Writers Workshop*. Ram Nath Kak (1917–1993), a Kashmiri veterinarian, wrote his autobiography *Autumn Leaves*, which is one of the most vivid portraits of life in 20th century Kashmir and became a sort of a classic.

R. K. Narayan (1906–2001) contributed over many decades and continued to write till his death. He was discovered by Graham Greene in the sense that the latter helped him find a publisher in England. Greene and Narayan remained close friends till the end. Similar to the way Thomas Hardy used Wessex, Narayan created the fictitious town of Malgudi where he set his novels. Some criticise Narayan for the narrow-minded, detached and closed world that he created in the face of the changing conditions in India at the times in which the stories are set. Others, such as Greene, however, feel that through Malgudi they could vividly understand the Indian experience. Narayan's memories of small town life and its experiences through the eyes of the endearing child protagonist Swaminathan in *Swami and Friends* is a good sample of his writing style. Simultaneous with Narayan's pastoral idylls, a very

different writer, Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004), was similarly gaining recognition for his writing set in rural India, but his stories were harsher, and engaged, sometimes brutally, with divisions of caste, class and religion. According to writer Lakshmi Holmström, "The writers of the 1930s were fortunate because after many years of use, English had become an Indian language used widely and at different levels of society, and therefore they could experiment more boldly and from a more secure position". Kamala Markandeya is an early writer in Indian English Literature who has often been grouped with R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. The contributions of Manoj Das and Manohar Malgonkar to the growth of Indian English Literature largely remains unacknowledged.

Among the later writers, the most notable is Salman Rushdie. Born in India and now living in the USA. Rushdie, with his famous work *Midnight's Children* (Booker Prize 1981, Booker of Bookers 1992, and Best of the Bookers 2008), led in a new trend of writing. He used a hybrid language – English generously peppered with Indian terms – to convey a theme that could be seen as representing the vast canvas of India. He is usually categorised under the magic realism mode of writing most famously associated with Gabriel García Márquez.

Writings by women have given a new dimension to the Indian literature. In the 20th century, women's writing has been considered a powerful medium of modernism and feminist statements. The last two decades have witnessed mind-blowing success in feminist writings of Indian English literature. The novels of Indian English women writers consist of the latest burning issues related with women as well as those issues that have existed in the society since long. Indian women writers have been exploring feminine subjectivity and deal with themes that range

from childhood to complete womanhood.

The novels of Anita Desai like *Voices in the City* and *Where Shall We Go This Summer* portray the complexities in a man-woman relationship. She has tried to explore the psychological aspects of the lead protagonists.

Feminism themes have also been used by authors like Nayantara Sahgal and Rama Mehta. Writings by Kamala Das, Anita Nair and Susan Viswanathan have a special place in Indian English writing by women. Novelists like Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai have captured the spirit of the Indian culture and its traditional values.

During the 1990s India became a popular literary nation as a number of women authors made their debut in this era. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Suniti Namjoshi and Anuradha Marwah Roy used realism as the main theme in their novels.

The list of novelists also comprises popular names such as Bharati Mukherjee, Nergis Dalai, Krishna Sobti, Dina Mehta, Indira Goswami, Malati Chendur, Gauri Deshpande, Namita Gokhale, Ruth Jhabvala, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy and Jhumpa Lahiri. They are known for the contemporary approach in their novels. Most of these female novelists are known for their bold views. Basically, their novels are of protest and are seen as an outburst of reservations.

Manju Kapur is an Indian writer and professor of literature in Delhi University. She was born in 1948 in Amritsar. Kapur graduated from the Miranda House University College for women and went on to take an M.A at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and an M.Phil at Delhi University. Her first novel, *Difficult Daughters*, won her the Commonwealth Prize for First Novels in 1999 and went on to become a bestseller in India, United States, and England. Her other four novels: A

Married Woman (2003), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2008), *Custody* (2011), and *Brothers* (2016) were highly acclaimed and very successful among readers and critics.

Kapur's preoccupation with the female revolt against deep-rooted family values and the institution of marriage is followed through to her second novel, *A Married Woman*. It is the story of Astha, a young woman brought up in Delhi in a typical middle-class household. Astha succumbs to her parents finding her a husband in the traditional arranged manner. She leads a seemingly blissful life finding her feet in the teaching profession as well as bearing two children. Yet somehow, underneath all this, lies a life of holding back and pain.

Against the backdrop of communal unrest in India with the Hindu-Muslim conflict over sacred ground in Ayodhya, Kapur develops the unrest within Astha's life. Her marriage becomes questionable after she involves herself in the outer world of rebellion and protest. *A Married Woman* is a well-balanced picture of a country's inner development - its strengths and its failures - and the pain of a woman's unrest, which is as complicated as the social and political confusion going on around her.

Home revolves around the family of Banwari Lal, a sari seller of Karol Bagh in Delhi. Banwari Lal is a migrant from Pakistan and is proud of the sari business he could set up in Delhi with his limited resources. He firmly believes in the spirit of a joint family and as a true elder, is ready to do anything for family honour. However, his principles are challenged by none other than his elder son, Yashpal who falls in love with Sona and marries her after a raging emotional blackmail of his family. As luck would have it, Sona could not bear a child for ten long years and becomes an easy target for the usual speaking by the women of the family.

The second blow to Banwari Lal's joint family comes from the tragic marriage and suspicious death of his daughter Sunita, who leaves behind a son, Vicky. Banwari Lal brings Vicky in his household despite opposition from the other family members and due to the underlying bias, Vicky becomes the black sheep of the family who is resented by everyone partly for his misfortune and partly for his bad behaviour towards Nisha – the loving daughter of Yashpal and Sona, who is born after ten years of rigorous prayers of her mother and is an apple of everyone's eyes in Banwari household.

With time, the usual rift is noticed between the brothers and owing to modernization, the 'Home' is fragmented to self-contained flats. The story progresses at a fast pace and soon becomes entangled with the grand children of house, of whom, Nisha is the main protagonist.

Manju has described the joyous growing up years of Nisha in a heart rending manner as Nisha is abused by her cousin, Vicky and though the family elders have a suspicion of Vicky's incestuous behaviour, they do nothing, owing to family honour. When she grows up, she starts going to college and gets romantically involved with a boy, however the affair fails and Nisha is left heartbroken and is infested with a disease that spoils all her beauty. The external beauty is bargained with the internal strength and confidence of Nisha and she becomes an independent business woman. After a lot of ups and downs, she at last marries a widower and gets settled into a Home.

Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant* is the story of one such woman who gets tangled in the question of her identity and nationality. Nostalgia, loneliness and longing – these are the main aspects that the novel explores about the main

character, Nina.

The story shifts the narrative between Nina and Ananda, who marries and brings her to Halifax, Canada, but largely focuses on that of the former. Nina is a vulnerable and apprehensive being, who struggles with the idea of adjustment in a new land. Attached to her only family, her mother, Nina had passed the Indian standards of what is called a marriageable age, which is the only subject of worry to her mother. However, she is married to an NRI, Ananda, and thus, fulfilling her mother's ambitious dream. Her wary idea of aloofness is smashed when she enters Canada. Cold, dry and desolated, the sparsely populated city grows over her like cancer, but this is nothing compared to the spine of the story.

Ananda is a successful dentist who left India after his parents' accident. His sexual problems, cloud his marriage to Nina. Their persistent struggle to find out a solution builds up the main plot.

Though the story is very different and breaks the mould of a categorical Indian female, the very fact that it is set in the 70's is indigestible. The modern thoughts and extra-marital affairs might be reasonable in view of the educated characters, but not sincere. Had the plot be set in the present times, the story could have been believable. Another abrasive aspect of the book is the Canadian lifestyle. Though it is absolutely understood why Ananda shelved his Indian way of living and adopted the other, Nina's sequence is not clear. The narrative was much likeable when she struggled to find a balance in the foreign land, but remained an Indian.

Kapur's *Custody* revolves around the story of Raman, a successful marketing executive at a global drinks company and Shagun, Raman's beautiful better half. Raman and Shagun have two children. The couple has an eight year old son, Arjun,

who looks like Shagun, and two year old daughter, Roohi who looks like Raman. By the virtue of Raman working in a reputed company, his family enjoys the monetary benefits and lifestyle. The company he works for largely invests in the manufacture of soft drinks.

Raman's boss' entry catalyzes the climax. The couple enjoys all the bliss of marriage, but one day when Shagun meets Ashok, Raman's boss at the brand and everything changes. Dynamic Ashok and beautiful Shagun, begin a passionate love affair. The affair grows larger to an extent that Shagun starts feeling uncomfortable and disturbed to playing the role as a wife, lover and mother. The battle between the happy couple begins. The lovebirds once upon a time, become enemies. Then, the ugly war takes over to the phase where she demand for a divorce, further moving onto the issues of custody of the children. Raman is shattered with all this as his happy married life becomes scattered. He feels angry on all this and pities himself.

Caught in this concentrated fight is the childless Ishita, who is possessed by the idea of motherhood. Ishita is a young divorcee who leads an independent life in the other part of the city. She feels satisfied in the social work that she is doing. Eventually, she gets attracted towards Raman, who is also a divorcee by then. She tempted about making a family and having a sense of completeness that she is yet to explore, and the idea of motherhood already appeals her. Among this story of broken hearts, relations and divorce, children become the silent observer. Entire second half of the novel is engrossed in seeing the devastating side-effects of the fight for the custody and its consequent resultants and trauma.

Brothers is author Manju Kapur's sixth novel, and much like the previous ones, it highlights the lives of women in multiple locations, rural, urban, domestic, public,

offering up for view the happenings within the home with the same urgency as the goings on in the world. Kapur deftly weaves a narrative that spans eight decades, from World War II to the first decade of the 21st century.

As mentioned, the novel may well be titled *Brothers* but it is, at heart, the story of Tapti Gaina, Mangal's wife. Tapti, makes choices that aren't allowed to other women characters. she chooses not to have more children, she chooses to exert her desire, she also works and earns for herself and her daughters. Her husband doesn't support her decisions, but he doesn't stop them either.

This changed gender equation owes much to the feminist movement that was overtaking India in the period the novel is set in. And, as Elizabeth Jackson writes in *Feminism And Contemporary Indian Women's Writing*, "The problem of violence against women was the initial focus of feminist campaigns in India during the 1970s"(18). Campaigns against rape, domestic violence and dowry deaths escalated during the 1980s, attracting considerable support from men as well as women.

Tapti's character implicitly critiques the Gaina family's attitude towards women, as property, as child-producing machines, forever subordinate. This doesn't inure her from tragedy. On the contrary, the book delves deep into the ways in which her modern, city-bred sense of equality leads to tension in her married life.

Manju Kapur is a feminist. Her novels are concerned with feminism and its impact on her female characters. Her first novel, *Difficult Daughters* focuses on the relationship between the mothers and daughters who belong to different generations. It is the story of a woman caught in between the sentimental situations of her family and her longing for education, affection, and freedom. There are different perspectives between the female characters about their exciting culture and norms.

When Kasthuri, the mother of the protagonist, Virmati, compels her daughter to accept the marriage as a traditional norm, Virmati refuses to accept it; instead she seeks knowledge. The narrator of the novel, Ida, is Virmati's daughter. Through her voice the novelist distinguishes the women from three generations. Manju Kapur takes Virmati as a weapon of her writings and through her she highlights of marginalization suffered by women who are primarily concerned about their individuality and dignity.

Virmati, a simple and educated woman is the central figure of the novel. Virmati, hails from an affectionate and well protected family goes to Lahore for further studies, accompanied by her mother. The limitation that women is weaker than man is foremost in India and the idea that she is a girl is reinforced by innumerable tragic instances in the novel. Virmati's father does not accept her going alone to Lahore questions 'who will go with her to Lahore'(32). Though the questions seems to be simple it mirrors the consideration of women to have no courage to make decision for herself and her future.

As Kasthuri, mother of Virmati is busy in delivering a baby year after year, it is Virmati who is in charge of the family and sacrifices herself to bring up her siblings. She remains as second mother for those children. Amidst this Virmati has no time to realize herself. She loses her days in taking care of the family. The family's old tradition of getting marriage is delayed for Virmati as she doesn't have any interest in it. Though her mother forces to get married she ignores, because she has interest towards education.

Shakuntala, Virmati's cousin is a symbol of modernity whom Virmati inspires a lot. Kapur portrays Shakuntala as an independent, defiant, and assertive girl. She

does not have any limitations towards the tradition of getting marriage, and family relationship. This is shown through the voice of Shakuntala "These people don't really understand Viru, how much satisfaction there can be in leading your own life, in being independent. Here we are, fighting for the freedom of the nation, but women are still supposed to marry, and nothing else" (156).

Virmati refuses the engagement with Indrajit and marries Harish, a professor whom she falls in love with at Lahore. Her passionate attraction for the professor makes her haunted by an overpowering sense of failure. This failure results from her unconventional path of selection that she has decided to be the co-wife of the professor. Experiencing her position of a co wife, the real purpose of marriage for Virmati is lost.

Ganga, Harish's first wife very dedicated to him and his family. There is a lot of difference between Harish and Ganga, their match is totally inharmonious. Ganga's negligence about study and lack of awareness brings Virmati to her husband's home as a second wife.

The next phase of problem arises when Virmati gives birth to her girl baby. As a remembrance of independence she names her baby as Bharati. But this is rejected by her husband saying that, "I don't wish our daughter to be tainted with the birth of our country. What birth is this? With so much hatred?" (207). Though the country has got freedom, the man who speaks about the country's freedom, cannot provide freedom for his wife even for trivial matters in the family. When India was fighting for the freedom from British government, Virmati literally fights for her own identity and affirmation. Her life from beginning to end is full of sufferings, conflict between mind and heart, searching for 'self', her own identity. She loses all her hope. Even her

daughter doesn't want to be like her mother.

Thus the novelist has explored and traced the journey of many such young women in this award winning book. They truly reflect the complexity of female psyche.

The next chapter deals with the chief concern in the novel *Difficult Daughters*, tracing women's fight for freedom even inside their family that misunderstands them to be rebellious.

Chapter Two

Fight for Freedom

In the land of Indian Fiction in English, women novelists have showed their spirit among the depressing situation in which the society was supported by patriarchy. During the first decade of twentieth century, women were mute puppets under the male domination and were deprived their basic rights, individuality and self reliance. Women were forced to act as an ideal wife, a mother and a home maker along with the numerous roles to play in the family. Though she performs a series of roles, she is not considered to be equal to man.

Nineteen nineties witnessed the beginning of many woman writers in India who proved to be remarkable in the portrayal of varied facets of pains and stitches of women both traditional and modern. Their works have paid sticks against the age-old patriarchal beliefs operating through the social environment, the familial-social traditions and myths. The Indian women novelists brought noticeable transformation to explore the unexplored array of problems; to describe the reality and pains of the women in Indian society. They also protested against the traditional role of women and broke the chains of silent suffering of women.

Manju Kapur is one among them who successfully and skilfully captured Indian beliefs. She shows her deep insight into human nature and deals with women and their problems, sex and marriage in all her novels. She explores the clash between tradition and modernity, identity crisis of women, and their quest for independence, the east-west conflict. In her novels she attempts to promote the women equal to men in every aspect. Her works portray the need of equal rights for girls in making their free choices in their lives. Tennyson says "The old order must

change, yielding place to new. Lest one good custom should corrupt the world”(50).

In *Difficult Daughters*, one can see the image of a ‘new woman’ emerging from the age-old archetypal woman. In creating the new woman, the author goes back to a status of a woman who is the very embodiment of the spirit of tradition, delves deep into the past and depicts the traditional woman characterized by certain inalienable traits, very cleverly she invents situations to project the image of the woman of the past and creates them strikingly different from her.

In every novel of hers, we predictably come across a woman character with traditionalist views and these characters happen to be the mothers who carry the burden of tradition and their immediate progeny their children come in conflict with their views. We may term this conflict as ‘Generation-gap’ or it may be the result of zeitgeist, the spirit of the times. After all change is the law of nature. But this change doesn’t take place casually; this change is actually the result of a fierce conflict between the old and the new.

The women in Manju Kapur’s novels, though they come from different socio-economic background, they belong to middle class and they are one in upholding the values of tradition. They hardly feel the pangs of dependence on others since they do not have what the concept of Independence means. As Meena Devi puts it: “They seem to be behaving uniformly. To them, it is the moral aspect that counts. Naturally they glorify the institution of Marriage as the “be-all and end-all” for themselves” (223).

All the women characters in *Difficult Daughters* clearly move around the spirit of marriage in the Indian context. The first set of characters like Lajwanti, Kasturi, Harish’s mother, Kishori Devi, and Harish’s first wife Ganga confine to the Indian

tradition of weeping brides. The second set of female characters, little radical and different from the first set, consists of Virmati, and her cousin Shakuntala, and her roommate, Swarnalatha. Virmati defies her own family and tradition. Her act of marriage with an already married Professor results in humiliation and misery. Her cousin, Shakuntala is a lashing and dynamic woman activist, politically agile, and conducts conferences for women. The third set of female characters includes Chhotti and Ida. This third of female characters set are categorically considered to be the prime concern of Manju Kapur. The self-willed Chhotti never marries, but the self-styled Ida enter the marital bond with a fellow of academic pursuit to settle a few contradiction of her personal life, which later ended with divorce, and childlessness.

In other words, this is a story of the unhappy life of a sensitive girl, Virmati, who is forced to suffer and enter into the terrible conflict in her life under the male dominated society. Virmati has ten sisters and brothers living together. As she is the elder, the responsibility of the family lies on her. During the array of pregnancies of her mother Kasturi, she looks after the household affairs in her tender age. She is almost second mother to her brothers and sisters. Ruby Milhoutra writes,

Kasturi's repeated pregnancies made her sickly, resulting in her total dependence on Virmati to manage household. As a natural consequence her unique position in the home is lost which she has to yield to her daughter quite unwillingly. Virmati thus becomes a 'substitute' and not the double that every wants her daughter to be. As a consequence the relationship assumes hostile dimensions. (165)

Virmati, the eldest of eleven children, didn't know what it was to be a child for

she was always busy with work. But she was so keen to study. She studied F.A., B.A. then B.T. and M.A. in Lahore. Virmati watches her weak, ailing mother harassed by childbirth and yet tolerant. The unmarried Shakuntala, her first cousin, appear to be Virmati's ideal and Virmati soon realized that answer to her unhappiness lay outside the house: "To education, freedom and the bright lights of Lahore Colleges" (15).

Virmati, with different perspectives and ambitions in life, doesn't have compromising nature. Her mind gets disturbed for small things, and this nature puts her in conflicting situation in Amritsar. In fact, living in Amritsar paves the new way to Virmati to enter the freedom which she desires to get for a long time. It is a journey from innocence to experience. For her, education means freedom and new outlook and attitude. In Amritsar, her attitude to life is completely changed, and she wants to get further education, but her family has declined her desire. Her mother Kasturi finds fault with Virmati's ambition and behaviour. "Leave your studies, if it is going to make you so bad-tempered with your family" (21).

"At your age I was already expecting you, not fighting with my mother" (22). She believes that the real business of a girl's life is to get married and look after her home. When a brief discussion takes place between mother and daughter about the proposed marriage of Virmati with the canal engineer, the latter suggests to her mother that she is not prepared to marry.

The dialogue between the mother and the daughter presents a live discussion on education versus marriage. According to Vera Alexander:

In the juxtaposition of marriage and education, education is either described in terms of a threat, or portrayed as a dead end, reducing accomplished female characters to obedient wifehood and

dependency rather than enabling them to make a living out of their training. (275)

Virmati's grandfather is a noted land-owner who strongly emphasizes on the education of women. His sons run a successful jewellery business. Virmati's family considers her eligible for marriage as she is proficient in stitching, cooking and reading. The life of her mother and her education sow the seeds of her urge to break free from the patriarchal set up that denies her freedom and choice. When Virmati pleads her mother that she was not harming anybody by studying, Kasturi responds in an angry tone "You harm by not marrying. What about Indu? How long will she have to wait? What is more, the boy is getting impatient, what about him?" (59). She is engaged to Indrajit but the marriage is postponed due to the demise of his father.

Dishonouring her family name she takes the step to commit suicide rather than get married. Her attempt at suicide is an insult to Kasturi and through her to the family name. Kasturi could not understand why her daughter did not want to get married and have a family.

For her mother, education is not important, but awareness of the traditional and conventional role of the Indian woman after marriage. As a difficult daughter, Virmati, stands firm in her decision to go to Lahore for education. In Lahore she finds company of Shakuntala. Virmati visits the Oxford University returned Professor, Harish, and falls in love with him. The love affair provides sensual and emotional fulfilment to both Virmati and the Professor. Later, this illegal relation has begotten confusion and conflict her. "She would sometimes wish that but what could she wish? Early marriage and no education? No Professor and no love?" (54).

Kasturi's traditional view of education is clearly revealed when she says,

What had come over the girl? She had always been so good and sensible. How could she not see that her happiness lay in marrying a decent boy, who had waited patiently all these years, to whom the family had given their word? What kind of learning was this, that deprived her of her reason? She too knew the value of education; it had got her husband, and had filled her hours with the pleasure of reading. In her time, going to school has been a privilege, not to be abused by going against one's parents. How had girls changed so much in just a generation. (60)

She is not happy and faces grim situations after marriage with Harish. Ganga, the first wife of Professor, could do anything in spite of accepting the fate and sobbing and crying in loneliness in the male dominated Indian society. Kishori Devi, Professor's mother, doesn't find fault with her son, and only consoles Ganga with sympathetic words. She says to Ganga: "In this life we can do nothing, but one duty" (211).

Virmati's second stage of suffering begins after the marriage. She hesitates to be comfortable to move freely with Ganga and Kishori Devi as she feels shameful to have married a married man. Her life with Professor in Amritsar is proved to be sombre and disastrous under the implacable and hostile treatment of the first wife of Professor. She loses her identity and unable to continue her studies in such a dire conflict.

Virmati is not accepted by Harish's mother and his first wife Ganga. She tries to be friendly with children but is insulted. She loses all sense of identity. The continuation of her education feeds no more dreams of independence. The highly

educated and economically independent Virmati fights social ostracism outside her house and struggles with Ganga to perform the household chores. The professor asks her not to bother about other things and asks her to read more. He seems to enjoy both the worlds: Ganga as a servant who fulfils his mundane needs and Virmati as an intellectual comparison. Virmati feels that it would have been better if she had not married Harish. "I should never had married you" (212). Bhagbhat Nayak writes,

The novel evokes some concern over the problems of women in a male-dominated society where laws for women are made by men in its social matrix and a husband stands as a 'sheltering tree' under which a woman proves her strength through her suffering. (103)

The clash between tradition and modern in Indian society has been categorical in this novel. Virmati is the symbol of modernity, and breaks the orthodox chains of tradition and boundaries of customs that have been fabulously prescribed with false intention by men. This clash of tradition and modernity is obvious in three generation of women – Kasturi, Virmati, and Ida. The relationships of Kasturi, Virmati, and Ida are much affected with ailment of generation gap.

Born out of typical Indian family, Virmati is caught between tradition and modernity. It results only in self-alienation and she becomes a symbol of female imagination, responding to pressures and the family structure at the Professors house is as oppressive as it was in her own home, there too she had to fight to get her mother's love and here also the constant struggle to get the Professors love and attention.

Virmati's financial dreams also have been broken by the practical mindedness

of Harish. She is unable to find her own freedom with Harish in Lahore and unable to get herself proper education. Her mind is in conflict with the unrestrained thoughts of freedom. In such isolation in Ganga's family, she falls in psychological jerk which causes loss of interest in life and emotional and intolerant illness. She loses her self-esteem when every activity was performed by his first wife Ganga. Virmati asks, "And, And what? As your wife, and I to do nothing for you?" (217). Kavita Tyagi observes:

The concepts of patriarchy were so strongly embedded in the psyche of women of older times that they, so fearful of their physical and financial security that they dare not cross their patriarchal thresholds for the fear of being discarded by society. (207)

Virmati again gets pregnant but unfortunately this time it is a miscarriage. She feels that God is punishing her for her sins. Her father is killed in rebellions but she is not allowed to go near his dead body and weep. Interestingly, the Professor is accepted and allowed to attend the last rites. Kasturi accuses her of disgracing the family and being the cause of her father's death. Virmati is shattered at the pain and decides to go to Lahore to do an M.A. Probably once again education was a means to regenerate her.

After completing her post-graduation, she comes back and finds that the rest of the family has been sent to Kanpur due to the riots. Virmati enjoys the bliss of being alone with her husband and so, Ida, the narrator is born. Despite defying the family and the traditions, Virmati ends up in becoming a mother who insists her daughter to adjust and compromise. She tries hard to keep her daughter in control, but to no avail. Virmati wants her daughter to be settled peacefully in marriage. But

Ida's marriage is unsuccessful and the narrator is left without husband and child.

Ida has been portrayed as a radical modern woman. Virmati is Kasturi's difficult daughter, Ida is the difficult daughter born to a difficult daughter. She is an issueless divorcee, and stays single which is a rare phenomenon unheard of in her grandmother Kasturi's times. She goes to Amritsar after her mother's death to delve deep into her mother's past in the process of understanding their relationship. There she discovered how her mother defied her own traditional-bound family in which marriage is acceptable but not independence. Virmati never informed Ida to assert her identity and inheritance from her mother she got "Adjust, compromise, adapt" (236).

Ida begins a journey into the history of her mother with a purpose to discover herself. What started as an alienation ends up in complete identification. But not all daughters are as fortunate as Ida. Virmati herself could never belong to her mother. Her pleasures, her pains, her pathetic life as a mistress and then a second wife, all remained her private sorrows. She could never share them with her mother. Kasturi never attempted to understand her. There seems a barrier between them which Virmati fails to pull down.

Ida becomes the typical daughter of a '*Difficult daughter*' Virmati. She could not develop an understanding with her mother during her lifetime and after Virmati's death this realization engulfs her with guilt. Ida sets on a journey into her mother's past in search of a woman she could know and understand. Ida rebels against Virmati reject her own womanhood and follows her own whims. But even though she experiences a strong bond with her mother, "without her I am lost, I look for ways to connect" (3).

The women in the novel represent either tradition or modernity. Kasturi remains traditional. Virmati and Ida fail to be completely traditional. They prove to be midpoint between tradition and modernity inviting conflict in their lives. Shakuntala and Swarna latha remain unaffected by their modern outlook and they are not caught up in the cob web of love. After completion of M.Sc., Shakuntala experiences happiness in leading an independent life. Such decision of not involving in marriage reveals her stringent character. Shakuntala motivates Virmati and invites her to Lahore to pursue further studies. The inspiration instilled in her by Shakuntla provoked her to reach the academic peak challenging the traditional family and its customs.

But Virmati is in contrast to Swarna latha. Virmati, as woman, lacks the courage and strength like her. Virmati aspires to be economically independent throughout her life, but vain. Swarna latha, Virmati's roommate in her post-graduation, postpones her marriage as she hankers for continuing her activities in Lahore. She wants to achieve something besides getting marriage. In course of time, she becomes a teacher with the support of her husband and parents, and paved a path for herself but channelizes her prudence and energy to have a new sense of identity for her unlike Virmati.

Ganga, the first wife of Professor, is a scapegoat and victim in the patriarchal society. Ganga has been portrayed as marginalized woman in a male dominated society due to her illiteracy. She was married to Harish in her childhood when she was three years old. She was not sent to school, but was well trained in housekeeping. She proves to be a good wife after entering in laws' house at the age of twelve years, but never proved to be an intellectual companion to Harish.

Difficult Daughters is the story of a freedom struggle. While India fights for freedom from the British, Virmati fights for the freedom to live life on her terms. Like so many other Indian girls, she wants to decide what to study and where, whom to marry and when. For in the struggle, she loses a part of herself. She is torn in two halves, one of which is the side she is fighting against.

Even today, thousands of girls sit within the four walls of their houses and wonder why they do not have the right to choose their own lives, decide for themselves whether they want to be homemakers or more. Marriage is still the reason for their birth. Kasturi, Virmati, Ida, Shakuntala, Swarna latha and Ganga are the difficult daughters in Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*. Virmati has been portrayed as a victim under the ruthless patriarchal dominance, who is caught up and sandwiched between tradition and modernity.

The next chapter highlights the protagonist's search for identity. It discusses how the protagonist is determined enough to achieve her aim even if the obstacles cloud her life.

Chapter Three

Quest for Identity

Identity suggests our thoughts and feelings, our psychic presence, our place of habitation, and even our longings, dreams and desires. The individual identity, like the national identity, is formed through a series of random and frequently strange growths. In the formation of individual identity, several factors come into play. One is the growing offspring of all these diverse and divisive forces.

The psychological term 'Identity Crisis' is defined as 'a period of uncertainty and confusion' in which a person's sense of identity becomes insecure, typically due to a change in their expected aims or role in society'. Ericson, a German born psychologist and psychoanalyst known for his theory on 'psychological development of human beings,' coined the term. The search for and discovery of identity has been a repeated journey throughout humanity's history, defined and explored in literary works.

The portrayal of woman in Indian English fiction as the silent sufferer and upholder of the tradition and traditional values of family and society has undergone a tremendous change. In the fictions of many women writers, woman has been presented as an individual rebel against the traditional role, breaking the silence and trying to move out of the caged existence and asserting the individual self. These women are trying to be themselves working within the sphere of the family ties. Manju Kapur's writings in 1998, portrays women protagonists trying to establish their personal identity and bring home the point that much remains to be done. The battle for autonomy remains an unfinished combat.

Difficult Daughters presents the tragedy of a female protagonist Virmati.

Pursuit for freedom and identity, form the core of Virmati's tragedy. She is divided between family duties, a desire for education and illicit love. The major portion deals with Virmati's love affair with a professor and the rest deals with her struggle for freedom. In her search of individuality, she rebels against tradition. She is provoked by the inner need to feel loved as an individual rather than as a responsible daughter. As a daughter, she turns difficult for the family and society when she sets out in search of her uniqueness.

Born in 1940, Virmati, the daughter of a traditional mother seeks human relations that would allow her to love herself. Her desire for self-expression and self-realization is condemned to failure by her own family as well as the man she marries. Through Virmati's character, Manju Kapur has dealt with the theme of efforts in self-identity via socio-cultural identity. Virmati symbolizes the country's struggle for independence on macro level. Psychologically, she reveals her rebellious nature against deep-rooted conventions of morality especially for a girl. She undertakes her journey to the path leading to one's individuality, but to her, it leaves in the midway with no achievement. But her image is unbound. The new woman arises full of confidence. She speaks eloquently and thinks independently, full of strength.

Women protagonists of Kapur are a personification of a new woman who struggle to throw off the burden of inhibitions she has carried for ages. They crave for self-sufficiency and separate identity. Trapped in the passion of their self, they also yearn to be a part of the political and intellectual movements of the day. Her protagonists are mostly educated. Their education leads to independent thinking for which their family and society become intolerant of them.

Things become difficult when the daughters learn to dream, to consider

identity and assert their individuality. Virmati is the insignia of the new woman. She needs to walk as an inseparable unit with men. She refuses to be clay in the hands of others. She attests the requirement for women's education and autonomy. She rejects the sort of life lead by her mother, battles for woman's freedom and economic wellbeing.

The novel traces Virmati's desperation for a space of her own to study, her desire to shed the surrogate motherhood forced on her. Being the eldest daughter she is burdened with family duties because of her mother's incessant pregnancies. "Ever since Virmati could remember she had been looking after children. It wasn't only baby Parvati to whom she was dispensable; to her younger siblings she was second mother as well" (6).

Virmati finished her B.A and her marriage date was fixed. For the sake of the family's name, Virmati was forced to sacrifice her study, her freedom. R.J. Kalpana in her article "Feminism and Family" writes: "The family is at once the source of women's affirmation as well as their subordination. They are heralded as martyrs of the struggle and as a source of regeneration and yet they are denied leadership position" (30).

She was against the arranged marriage with an engineer and fell in love with Professor Harish who was already married. She reproached him with harsh words when she heard the news of his wife's pregnancy as well as his confession of love for her. When Virmati found no solution to her problem of taking decision, at last she tried to commit suicide thinking that death can bring solution to her worries: "Now that she was actually going to merge her body with the canal she felt her confusion clearing" (76). But she was saved. She revealed her desire to study further. She

decided to do her Bachelor of Teachers' Training in spite of several hurdles. During her search to find an individual space, she faced many obstacles.

Virmati was caught in a psychological conflict as on the one side there were family customs, norms, and traditional values, and on the other was her illicit love for Professor. Her decision to go to Lahore was prompted by her desire to forget him. But she failed in her mission. She yielded to the Professor's passions in her loneliness during her stay at Lahore and helplessly succumbed to the temptations of the body. Consequently, she realised that she had become pregnant and was left with no other alternative but to go in for an abortion. She knew that the professor would not render any support to her and was left with no alternative. She decided to take the action to save her family from shame. She regretted the fact that she had come to Lahore for expanding her mental horizons but ended with meaningless love relationship.

She wanted to do something meaningful in her life like her roommate Swarnalatha. She was moved by Swarnalatha's words. She asked Virmati to wake up from her stale dream and told her how plenty of married women were also involved in the freedom movement. She participated as a freedom activist, but failed to transcend her underlying need for love and emotional dependence. But Virmati found herself locked in new prisons even as she broke old ones. She silently endured her pain and frustration and failed to get out of her emotional craving for the professor.

The novel represents the turmoil of the protagonist who tries to overcome her cultural identity and her attempt at self-identification leaves her hard-hearted and desolate. She had to fight against the power of her mother as well as the oppressive forces of patriarchy symbolized by the mother figure. Virmati struggles between the physical and moral, the head and the heart. Finally, she gives way to her heart and

body. The rebellious nature in herself might have actually exchanged one kind of slavery for another. But towards the end, she becomes free, free even from the oppressive love of her husband. Once she succeeds in doing that, she gets her husband all by herself, her child and reconciliation with her family.

Simon de Beauvoir's ideology about identity of women in *Second Sex* is "One is not born but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature" (140). Similarly this novel represents the changing image of women; moving away from traditional portrayals of enduring women, self-sacrificing women towards self-assured, assertive and ambitious women making society aware of their demands and in this way providing a medium of self-expression.

The Indian woman is caught in change of tradition and modernity loaded with the burden of the past that results in discarding her aspirations. The women in this novel goes through transitional phase where they become different from traditional women and want to tread new paths. The modern woman does not find any sense in such self-sacrifice and yearns for self-expression, individuality and self-identity. A woman is never regarded as an autonomous being since she has always been assigned a subordinate and a relative position. "Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without a man" says Simon de Beauvoir (142).

For centuries, women were always back staged by the patriarchal world. Literature, art and scriptures too consider women as gentle and submissive. If a woman appears to be against this ideological framework of feminine, she is considered immoral. On one side, there are certain examples in Hindu mythology,

well known characters like Sita, Savitri to reveal Pativarta and in contrast if one goes against these conventional norms, they are blamed. *Difficult Daughters* represents the emergence of new women who is no longer the “chaste wife whose suffering can only make her more virtuous, the nurturing mother who denies her own self, the avenging Kali or a titillating strumpet”(242). Partially based on the life of Kapur’s own mother, the novel movingly evokes the multiple frustrations encountered by the central character, Virmati, in her efforts to educate herself and establish a domestic space, she can call home.

The novel spans around three generations of women – Kasturi, Virmati and Ida. Sunita Sinha in her article “Discovery of Daring and Desire in Manju Kapur’s Fiction” writes:

The three generation of women symbolize the three stages of Indian independence. Kasturi the mother represents pre-independence period and is shown as victim of the offensive control of Patriarch Virmati her daughter, represents the country’s struggle for independence Ida, Virmati’s daughter, is the product of the post-independence era and she established herself as an independent woman. (162)

The theme of the novel describes the independence acquired by the nation and the independence desired by the protagonist as well. Her life is described in a realistic way. The aspiration of the girl to be free is linked with the values of a traditional middle-class joint family; a very significant aspect of Indian social life. Virmati rebelled against the patriarchal set up to pursue higher studies and marry Professor Harish. Thus Singh writes,

Manju Kapur dives deep in to human emotions and passions of modern life

and presents different colours with minute observation and detail also. She seems to be the novelist of modern Indian woman who is in the state of transformation in woman's voice I modern Indian English writing. Her novels are able to present the picture of human life in detailed manner. (10)

The Indian middle-class values and culture are prominently depicted in the background of *Arya Samaj*. Education is the only source she can turn to in all her crisis. The expedition for self is another important feature of Kapur's novel. Yael Tamir writes, "The quest for identity exhibits a basic human need, the need to structure one's personal identity in relation to others, to identify oneself with what lies outside the self, to find roots and establish connections to the past as well as to the future" (175).

The three generations of women - Kasturi, Virmati and Ida symbolize the three phases of Indian independence. Through these three female protagonists, the author has revealed the life cycle of a woman from the beginning of her life. As a child, a girl has to do house hold works as Virmati does. After marriage, she has to bear pain to give birth to a child, as Kasturi's condition reveals. After having 11 children her whole life is dedicated to her family. Kasturi, the mother, represents the pre-independence and is shown as a victim of patriarchy. Virmati, the daughter, symbolizes the country's struggle for independence. Ida, Virmati's daughter, is the product of the post-independence era and establishes herself as an independent woman.

In her young age, Virmati wished not to live like her mother and wanted to study in Lahore. She rejected her mother's world which revolved around family life, marriage and child bearing. She was burdened with family duties because of her mother's continuous pregnancies and was constantly suffering to be independent,

defiant, and assertive as her cousin Shakuntala. Shakuntala symbolizes modernity and encourages Virmati to be independent and fight for equal rights for women. The new woman breaks the customs of the tradition bound society. Both Shakuntala and Virmati came out of the ideological framework of being a typical Indian woman. Shakuntala takes part in the political Gandhian movement, whereas Kasturi's ideology is confined to patriarchy and she remarks "Hai re, beti! What is need to do a job? A woman's shaan is in her home. Now you have studied and worked enough shaadi. After you get married, Viru can follow" (16).

Shakuntala sowed the seeds of freedom in Virmati. She encourages her to fight for independence and for equal rights for women, thus epitomizing the post-colonial uncontrolled 'New Woman'. This new woman breaks the customs of the tradition bound society. Since the establishment of the society, woman were deprived of social security, political awareness and economic liberation. In this context, Simon de Beauvoir comments, "The situation of woman is that she - a free and autonomous being like creature – nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assure the status of the other" (144). Both Shakuntala and Virmati come out of the ideological framework of being typical Indian women.

The most successful moment in her life was the episode at Nahan, when she became the headmistress of a girl's school. J.L. Styan writes,

. . . man was a lonely creature of anxiety and despair living in a meaningless world, and that he was merely existing until he made a decisive and critical choice about his own future course of action. By such a choice, a person would acquire an identity, a purpose and dignity as a human being. For preference, existential man should adopt some social or political cause in order to acquire

this dignity and purpose (128)

She attained the autonomy over her life, which she had craved all along and eventually discovered her own space to live. Gur Pyari Jandial points out that it is a mistake to devalue Virmati's struggle just because she failed, for what mattered was to have made the attempt "to break the patriarchal mould, and for Virmati to have tried to do that in the forties was a great achievement" (47).

The women of India have indeed achieved their success in half a century of Independence; but if there is to be a true female independence, too much remains to be done. The fight for autonomy remains an unfinished combat. Vinita Singh Chawdhry in her article, "Acculturation, Identity, and Adaptation in Manju Kapur's Writing" centres on what has frequently been called an 'identity quest'. "It is identity that differentiates individuals; identity is constructed on an individual basis – but within a given social structure. The alienation from one's own society could lead to a corresponding alienation of identity" (8).

Virmati's history is reconstructed by her daughter Ida who undertakes a journey to know her mother's past. The name Ida implies, as Prasad says "a new state of consciousness, a fresh beginning" (163). The novel opens with the declaration of the narrator, Ida, "The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother. Now she was gone and I stared at the fire that rose from her shrivelled body, dry-eyed, leaden, half dead myself, while my relatives clustered around the pyre and wept" (1).

In the end, Virmati's story disappears and becomes irrelevant. It is only after her death that her daughter, Ida sees her as a lonely woman who had committed the unforgivable sin of craving an identity of her own. She is considered a sinner to the backbone. Even her daughter doesn't justify her mother's ways. The novel speaks

not only of Virmati but of other difficult daughters who succeed better than she did in their parallel struggle for independence in their lives. Ida is shown as leading a free life than her mother in external terms, yet inside her she feels the same anxieties as her mother. She is the narrator through whose voice Kapur speaks in the novel. Virmati couldn't speak out, being certainly situated at the juncture of two oppressions: colonialism and patriarchy. What we have is her daughter's reconstruction and representation. Though at the center of the narrative we see a woman who fights, but falls and fails, Kapur's novel shows that what happens to Virmati is the representative destiny of Indian woman.

In the first phase, the women's demand developed basically in the framework of the identity crisis of the new cultivated middle class. Kapur's female characters are mostly cultivated, ambitious individual captive within the restrictions of a traditional society. Their education leads them to self-governing idea. It is their individual struggle with family and society through which they pitched into an enthusiastic determination to shape an identity. The novel not only refers to the difficult daughter Virmati but also refers to the numerous other difficult daughters who left the boundaries of their home and involved themselves in the national struggle for freedom.

The next chapter focuses on the author's technique of implementing the versatile nature of women under different circumstances of life.

Chapter Four

Woman: A Multifaceted Personality

In *Difficult Daughters*, Manju Kapur presents the protagonist being endowed with distinctive traits that make her different from any other protagonist of her novels. In the first place, she creates one type of character that is caught in the web of tradition and appears in two forms: firstly, it reveals its suffocation in the patriarchal society and secondly, the burden of male chauvinism on women. The character seems to be lost in fighting against the forces that hold back her growth and suppress her individuality; and this makes her feel suffocated for want of freedom of thought or action. Hence, protagonist struggles to free herself from the cruel clutches of tradition and patriarchal system of the society.

The characters that belong to the period of transition in the novel is distinctly different from their predecessors of the immediate past generation represented by their parents and their grandparents, and this generation gap is characterized by a new way of thinking. These people set their backs against those men of orthodox views. Manju Kapur very skilfully creates this transition which bridges the period of pre-independence and the immediate post-independence India.

The initial period of post independence India presents new view points of the people that make tremendous progress in almost every sphere of activity. During this period of transition, prominent changes have taken place. It has been well realized by one and all that education for women is a must and necessary and the government makes every effort to provide equal opportunities for women, along with men, in the field of education and employment. Women, especially the educated middle class women, do not wait behind men. They constantly struggle to be on

equivalence with men and to build up their own identity both in their private and public life. This aspect of the educated middle class women is very powerfully reflected in Manju kapur's novel.

The terms 'Feminism' has its origin from the Latin word 'femina' which means 'women'. Thereby, it refers to the advocacy of women's right which establishes that women should have the same social, economical and political rights as men. The term became popular in the early twentieth century showing struggles for securing woman's suffrage in the western countries and the well organized socio-political movement for women's emancipated from the patriarchal oppression.

Seeking gender equality to have access to health and education as well as political rights is the prime expectation of Feminists. It is worth mentioning that feminists in India have also fought against cultural issues within the patriarchal society of India. The set of movements intending of equal social, economical, political rights and equal opportunities for Indian women are the typical elements of feminism in Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*.

As a feminist writer, Manju Kapur's novels raise strong protest against the male dominated Indian society. Her novels portray the New Indian woman's voice. A "New Women" in search of self-identity, seeks liberation in all walks of life and replaces the traditional image of Indian women. In *Difficult Daughters*, it is very much evident that a stereotypical women character is transformed into "New Women" by replacing the tradition image of Indian Women. She projects a new vision of Indian women. She denounces the persistence of traditional idea that marriage is essential for women. She deliberately depicts the character of two girls of two different attitudes, one with traditional and the other with new modern outlook. Virmati,

represents the former category and Shakuntala, her cousin is an example of the latter category. Kapur draws a strong contrast between these two women characters.

Women are considered as submissive people in this novel. Kasturi gives birth to eleven children. This makes her health weak and feeble. Her husband does not take care or consider her health. She is denied of enjoying equal rights. So she is thrown in to a situation where she cannot reject giving multiple births. She does not get a chance to speak about equal rights to her husband. Virmati gets pregnant by Harish. She is the second wife of Harish. He compelled her to abort the child. She refers to abort the child in her pursuit of identity. She loses respect and positions but struggles to make space for herself on her own. Mayur Chhikara writes,

The novelist has portrayed her protagonist as a woman caught in the conflict between the passions of the flesh and a yearning to be a part of the political and intellectual movements of the day. The women of India have indeed achieved their success in half a century of Independence, but if there is to be a true female independence, much remains to be done. (189)

Virmati, like her mother, treats her daughter Ida with the strict patriarchal norms. She fails to be an understanding mother for Ida. This forces Ida to suffer from being independent. Like Virmati, Ida also fights for her identity, dignity and self-confidence. She rejects the family norms and male dominated society. Ida becomes a typical daughter of a 'Difficult Daughter', Virmati.

Virmati plays a prominent role by taking care of her family. Virmati becomes a second mother to her siblings. She discharges all the responsibilities and duties of what a male heir does. So, all the burden of the household work and raising younger

sisters and brothers conditions Virmati's susceptible childhood. She divides her time between helping her anaemic mother with the household chores and her studies. She yearns to lead a cheerful life and aspires to become an independent woman in her life. Virmati is understood by the readers as a strong woman who struggles to establish her identity. In the process of her realization of a "New Woman" her abilities to lead an independent life is questioned by dominant men power.

Neither Virmati treads comfortably on the path of political struggle or academic life. She is constantly blocked by Harish's incessant interferences. It is nevertheless remarkable that the author deliberately chooses two female figures – Shakuntala and Swarnalatha involved in non-violent activism against British occupation and who will apply a definite influence on their development as an individual. Virmati is criticized by her in-laws and deeply hated by Ganga, her husband's first wife, who bears a permanent grudge against her. Virmati's prospective role as a wife, not allowing her to pursue her studies without hindrance becomes her additional burden.

At Nahan, Virmati happily settles and gets adapted to the new environment and busy with her teaching and administration of the school and subsequently, she marries the married professor and becomes his second wife and Virmati feels that it is her personal victory. This makes the beginning of another chapter in her marriage life. She is drunk with a sense of personal pride; all her near relatives, parents and grandfather are relegated into the background of her consciousness. For the present, Virmati finds her own identity as the wife of the Professor. We see that Virmati is more traditional than modern since she gives such religious importance to her union with the Professor.

Virmati was sure that neither her parents nor grandfather would ever forgive. The process of rejection that had started. Let them damn her as they might at least she had this new life she promised herself a blissful marriage; after all they had gone through so much to be together. Her husband would be everything to her. This was the way it should be, and she was pleased to finally detect a recognizable pattern in her life. (207)

A clear image of Virmati emerges through the pages of the novel as one less assertive and more wavering in her decision and above all a tendency towards romantic leanings and this finally proves to be her tragic flaw. One perceives that Virmati struggles to free herself from the tight grip of tradition in order to pursue her strong inclination for education, which is a mark of modernity. When the reader critically analyses Virmati's life, the root cause of her tragic situation is her marriage with the Professor, a refined villain of the piece, who with his tricky arguments deceives over inexperienced, naive and simple Virmati. Virmati's saga of quest for identity and aspirations in life were finally satisfied with her eventual death and extinguished in the funeral. Binod Mishra says,

However educated or innovative an Indian woman is, her Indian background and psyche cannot feel satisfied unless society approves of her endeavours and her relationship. Virmati's tragedy is the tragedy of ambition, obsession and un-claimed ovation. (151)

The two other women, Shakuntala and Swarnalatha, are introduced as women of modern views leading independent lives. Shakuntala, has been endowed with a clear vision for future against the background of tradition which her mother. She is intelligent, independent, sophisticated and above all rebellious in her attitude. She

disapproves the concept of marriage as the supreme good of life and reacts to this traditional idea. She has emerged out as an anti-traditionalist. She is driven by a new vision that stubbornly opposes the traditional point of view. The first unconventional view of Shakuntala is that a woman should have higher education so that she could lead an independent life and to her, marriage comes next. She says "These people don't really understand Viru, how much satisfaction there can be in leading your own life, in being independent. Here we are, fighting for the freedom of the nation, but women are still supposed to marry, and nothing else" (17). R.K.Mishra says,

This reaction expressed by Shakuntala evidences Kapur's rebellious attitude against the servitude of women. She uses this woman character as her own mouth organ and advocates freedom and education for Indian woman and their participation in National reconstruction. What authenticates this advocacy is Swarnalatha's involvement in freedom struggle. (58)

Shakuntala possesses the traits of a young lady emerging into modernity. Although the role of Shakuntala is limited in the novel, Kapur brings out certain prominent traits in Shakuntala to illustrate her distinctive expression of her life style that is out and out modern. Shakuntala has absorbed the spirit of modernity so much that she has left behind her an unbridgeable gap between the old world of tradition and the new world of modernity to which she belongs. She seems to be self assertive and a woman of independent decision. She appears emotionally stronger to accept the dominant structures of the traditional society. During her stay at Dalhousie, Virmati watches Shakuntala's unconventional way of life.

She watched her ride horses, smoke, play cards and badminton, act

without her mother's advice, buy anything she wanted without thinking it a waste of money, casually drop in on all the people the family knew. Above all, she never seemed to question or doubt herself in anything.

(18)

Shakuntala have done her post-graduation, has strong opinions about marriage, education and independent life of woman. Thus the main role of Shakuntala in the novel consists in bringing about a total metamorphosis in Virmati and thus Shakuntala stands apart from the other transitional characters as one with a vibrant identity.

Swarnalatha is another modern woman character introduced a little after nearly one-third of the novel happens to be the room-mate of Virmati at Lahore where she does her M.A., after postponing her marriage. Swarnalatha is portrayed as a young, active lady with a intense social consciousness. She is very much inclined to perform some kind of social service; she, like many young educated ladies of those times, comes under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. It is against this background, Swarna's mother insists that she should be married as she completed her under graduation. By then Swarna latha had had a different mindset. She believed that there are other things for her to pursue besides marriage. She was not against marriage rather it was about priority.

She pleaded her parents that she wants to be left alone at least for two years before she could think of her marriage and she would be highly grateful to them if they grant her request; otherwise, she would offer Satyagraha. She tells Virmati about what has happened between her parents and herself before coming to Lahore.

I told my parents that if they would support me for two more years I

would be grateful. Otherwise I would be forced to offer Satyagraha along with other Congress workers against the British. And go on until taken to prison. Free food and lodging at the hands of the imperialists. (118)

Christopher Rollason says,

The pages of *Difficult Daughters* speak not only of Virmati, but of other, difficult daughters, who succeed better than she did in their parallel struggles for independence in their lives. At the centre of the narrative, we are confronted with a woman who fights but falls by the wayside; but at its edges, as no doubtless representative but still symbolic figures, we encounter as will be seen below other women, whose relative success points the way to the future. (3)

That part of the novel that deals with Swarnalatha, reconstructs the whole personality of that lady. Swarnalatha seems to have been possessed by a strong spirit of patriotism. She is very much against segregation of Hindu-Muslim communities. A vision of united India floats before her. Swarnalatha's voice is the voice of millions of Indians Hindus and Muslims, is against the artificial segregation especially on religious lines. While addressing the Punjab Women's Student Conference, held at LajPat Rai Hall Swarnalatha makes the following relevant observations,

As women, it is our duty, no, not duty, that word has unpleasant connotations. It is our privilege to be able to give ourselves to the unity of our country. Not only to the unity between rich and poor, between Muslim and Hindu, between Sikh and Christian. Artificial barriers have

been created amongst us to gain power over insecure and fearful minds. Let the politics of religion not blind out to this fact. (145)

Swarnalatha, somehow, has gained a broader understanding of herself in relation to society and vice versa. Virmati, as far as her views are concerned, appears timid before Swarnalatha's catholicity of social understanding. This is due to her exposure to the times which pass through a current of changes such as enslaved India attaining Swaraj and subsequently the sub-continent of India being divided into two countries, Hindustan and Pakistan that has caused bloodshed of people belonging to both the religions. Swarnalatha shared directly or indirectly all the troubles of the time. Virmati attains enlightenment and insights about life in general and about her own life in particular after getting in touch with Swarnalatha. She is the one who instilled courage and confidence to look forward to her future during the days of complete hopelessness. Incidentally, Swarnalatha presents the image of a modern woman before Virmati saying; "We are responsible for our own futures. Marriage is not the only thing in life, Viru. The war the Satyagraha movement because of these things, women are coming out of their homes. Taking jobs, fighting, and going to jail. Wake up from your stale dream" (151).

It is this aspect of her character that Swarnalatha emerges as a unique one. Although comparatively small space has been allotted for her character in the novel, Manju Kapur has very powerfully depicted Swarnalatha. She appears to be a clear-headed social activist. Unlike Virmati, she channelizes her energy in new directions, which gives her sense of group identity. She is a full time committed activist and appears as the mouthpiece of contemporary women who fights for her rights. She is bold, outspoken, determined and action oriented. Swarna's words as well as actions

reveal her as a staunch feminist, fighting for every right of women. Swarnalatha, in her second encounter with her old friend and roommate Virmati, who comes to Lahore to study M.A. Philosophy asks her to join the demonstration against Draft Hindu Code Bill.

Malashri Lal says: "Indian women despite their acceptance of the intellectual message of individual, gender based critique from the west, wish to remain in active link with family and community concepts in India" (28).

Thus, Manju Kapur brings out the changing role of women in her novel and how the women, passing through a period of transition, crossing the threshold of patriarchal hegemony make a relentless crusade braving through the stifling circumstances until they emerge as emancipated women. Manju Kapur's fiction stresses the women's need for self-fulfillment, autonomy, self-realization, and a fight for her own destiny, independence, individuality and self-actualization. She presents the hidden particulars of woman psyche in her novels. Her protagonists make an effort to take apart the gender division up to a great extent.

The author has very capably presented her characters during the period of transition so as to characterize them with special distinctive traits. The novelist used the backdrop of partition to build a story of absorbing passion but it is partition in more than one way. Her novel touches many issues like revolt against deep-rooted family tradition, the search for selfhood, women's rights, marriage and the battle for independence. Here, the observation of Christopher Rollason says:

Search for control over one's destiny, surely the key theme of *'Difficult Daughters'* refers to the Independence aspired to and obtained by a nation (despite its cruel division by fateful partition), but also to the

independence yearned after (and finally not obtained) by a woman and members of that same nation (or of its rival communities). (45)

The next chapter sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and shows how Kapur paves way for the subjugated women to fight for their identity and the importance of education in women life.

Chapter Five

Summation

Feminism, like many other 'isms' in the contemporary times, is marked by difficulty and excess of interpretations. There are different schools of thought that have influenced feminist understanding in one way or the other. There are feminist thinkers who propose equality to women according to their different natures and needs based on psycho-sexual thoughts. But this argument of different natures is rejected by others as constructed on the basis of essentialist binary logic that propagates hierarchical human relationships. Apart from this, the multiplicity of ideas based on specific cultural, historical and social practices informs the variety and plurality in feminist perspectives. Feminism does not function as an overarching, unitary system, rather it means different things in different national and regional locations. It is pertinent to note that Abraham has said, "Feminist theory does not privilege any one school of feminist thought over the other. In this, it demonstrates both its dislike of patriarchal hierarchization and its openness in acknowledging, the various trajectories feminists take in order to combat patriarchy" (13).

The significance of education regarding women's independence is realized even today. It is education that enables women to realize the nature of their subjugation, marginalization and suppression and helps find effective ways to check it and acquire a self-dependent, autonomous self. The following words by Basche bring out the significance of education for woman's freedom, "Now the new education has awakened her real self. As a result of this she has started thinking of independent and self-reliant life. And in order to translate this thinking into reality, she has started fighting against her own timid self as well as man's protectoral shell"

(130).

Indian English fiction had women writers who focused on man's world where the presence of woman was only incidental. There were writers who selected women protagonists. But their portrayal was to compare with the real life woman. The suffering wife, widow, mother were the only images found in fiction. Traditional and cultural perspective dominated this story. All the women novelists write from their personal experiences almost all of them end up in one or other form of feminism. Some of them give us their life style in fiction and all identity with their female characters. Manju Kapur's writing reflects the knowledge of woman in real world.

In the novels of Manju Kapur, feminism can be traced out in different perspective in the so-called age of modernity. In the world of Literature, all of her novels received great appreciation from the readers, the reviewers and the critical experts. She has handled different types of themes, archetypal middle class dreams, believes and aspirations in her novels. She explores the female status in family and the society. Family issues are the central theme of her all novels. She believes family situations, the nature of human relationship and persistence of human reality. All the novels of Manju Kapur have the soul of modernity. Modernity is distinguished from freedom which is linked with traditions, conventions and customs. Compassion, sympathy, sacrifice and culture loads are linked with womanhood. Kapur's unique sense of feminism in her novels is well displayed in her novels in outstanding manner. She presents human beings in the context of conflict, especially family conflict has been reorganized as the core issue of her novels.

In an interview with Jai Arjun, Manju Kapur says, Literature by women, about

families, always has these larger considerations, with years of studying texts, it becomes almost second nature to look beneath the surface at social and economic forces, gender relationships and how they are played out in an arena that, in my writing happens to be the home. But then, all sort of things happening outside do affect what is happening inside the home.

She writes about personal experiences problems spaces and identity crises. She writes what today's woman can relate easily and see her novels as of their own life. She deals with the traditional and modernist ethos, women trying to find their identity. Her women characters argue for the values like freedom of thought and expression, liberty from oppression and marginalization and equality as quest for dignity are chief moves offer her imagination and creativity.

Through her novel she focuses on the life of female characters. Her central characters struggle for their own identity in the patriarchal setup. The novels mainly focuses on the masculinity of men which is forever in question. Her novels explain women's struggle for freedom from the restrictions they have been set by the conventions. Thus, Kapur's fictional works are representative of extending arena of women's writing in English from India.

Kapur's novels show the lives of women portraying their fight for basic rights, longing for their own identity and survival. With the help of education the protagonists become aware of their self-reliance. It also helps them to walk on new horizon. They have considerable liberty of expression and thoughts. In each and every field they not only compete with men but also work efficiently like their male counter parts.

Kapur is realistic because of her association with the rural and urban life of

India, particularly Southern part of India. She has effectively presented almost all the significant features and different colours of Indian receptivity throughout her novels. She has drawn the practical characters and situation to represent the sensible change the world is going through.

Manju Kapur's presentation of life in all novels impresses every one. She plays the role of a natural observer in her works. She highlights the negative aspect and the behaviour of the existing society. Through her novels, she conveys the message that people should rise above the trivial man made barriers of caste, religion and culture and should imbibe the spirit of love and fraternity. She attempts to show her concerns at the growing tendency of unrest in our society caused by man's attempt to exploit man for selfish gains and motives. She, in fact, shows her keen interest in the relationship of individual and society and then searches the possibilities and mechanisms of change in the individual resulting in society at large. Her investigation and presentation of human consciousness are directed towards an objective account of human's emotions assessing Indian confrontation with reality. Her novels are not propaganda for reforms but they represent the ambivalence of change.

Kapur's keen sensitivity of realism and her influential thoughts that have gone a lengthy way to shape and style her vision of life within the confines of life in India. Her novels illustrate evidently a much broader variety, a greater reality of setting, character and affect, and really all embracing and persistent vision of Indian life. Her insight of Indian life as she bestowed in her novels is construct on her keen observation and dynamic creativity. She knows the real content of truth and how truths are containing and grasp in to art. Her proficient and attractive depiction of

outer and inner world of reality is come out of her artistic sensibility.

Kapur's presentation for the house-hold life of traditional society is ample and different. It contains all types of house-hold burdens and cares from the inconsequential to the evident ones. The author also presents how men and women execute their responsibilities, carry out family duties, and experiencing home delight. We have plenty proof of Indian ethnicity and custom such as wives are revealed to helping their husbands even as husbands do not assist their wife in house-hold duties as per the traditional rules. Whatsoever the easy or heavy work is found within the home is done by women. If they want to go out of home for work before they get permission their husbands. The presentation of domestic life shows moments of love as well as of quarrel and argument.

The title of the novel *Difficult Daughters* states the message that a woman who tries to search her identity, is named as difficult by the family as well as society. This is a story of sorrow, love and compromise. The main part deals with Virmati's love affair with the professor and remaining part deals her struggle for realization of her own independent identity during this period, Virmati's relationship with professor goes extreme. Meanwhile she finished her BA and hesitated her marriage. After that she was sent to Lahore for her higher studies where too her relationship with professor develops and it leads to pregnancy. With the help of her roommate Swarnalatha, she aborted her child while she went to Delhi for her career, suddenly Virmati and Harish happens to get married. Though she is a wife of Harish she feels incomplete and inconvenient in Harish's house. After that she gave birth to Ida.

Virmati has to rival against the power of the mother as well as oppressive forces of patriarch symbolized by the mother figure. Kasturi, mother of Virmati,

reject her education which leads Virmati's strong decision to study further. It makes controversy between mother and daughter. Because Kasturi born to an ancestral family where she brought up by the traditional values and ancient habits'. So, Kasturi wants the same from her daughter Virmati, what she has learned and what she has done in her family and she expect the same in her children generation. For that, Virmati just opposite to her mother insisted on education which is her chief step to resistance. The young generation inspired by freedom struggle seeks out ways for individual freedom as well. The fore runners thought of nationalist movement and the ideas of women's education provide the independent thinking.

In spite of resisting the patriarchs, Virmati had the feeling that whatever she did was not write. She had failed in her duty and that she would be punished for it someday. Her family's repeated trial to see sense failed. They told her that "men or not to be trusted" (81). Virmati in *Difficult Daughters* is termed as difficult because she rebelled and defined the age old traditions. She does all the household works and she never raised her voice against anyone in her house. Though she behaves like archetype of daughter she longs for the freedom as like her cousin Shakuntala.

The novel presents the changing image of women away from traditional portrayals of enduring women, self-sacrificing women towards self-assured, assertive and ambitious women making society aware of their demands and providing a medium of self-expression. A psychological identity relates to self-image, self-esteem and individuality. Anthropologists have often employed the word 'identity' to refer the idea of selfhood based on uniqueness and individuality which makes a person different from others. A woman is never regarded as an autonomous being since she always been a subordinate and a relative position.

The most constructive period in Virmati's life was at Nahan where she led her life like a free bird without anything to worry about. She works as a headmistress which gave her economic independence; it is here she gains greatest degree of control over her life. She earns respect and all the responsibilities were to be set by herself. This gave new turn and life to her. She has nothing even her family but she has self-autonomy. She has her own place to live. Manju Kapur's novel reveals that the women in her novel are of ultra-modern era who wants their individuality. In this story, subsequent challenging difficult life marks the stages of development from individual crisis to identity achievement.

In *Difficult Daughters*, Manju Kapur not only focus Virmati, but also her feelings. She deals with number of other women characters and how they can fight for their freedom. Not only they fight for their freedom, but also actively participate in the political activities. *Difficult Daughters* is a painful story of a sensitive girl who struggle in the male-dominated society.

Virmati's daughter Ida is the third generation women. She is strong and clearheaded. She breaks up her marriage and gets divorce from her husband for as she is denied maternity by her husband. The enforced abortion is also the rejection of her marriage. Ida by breaking off the marriage bond releases herself from male domination and power and also from typical social structures which bind women. She has that courage which Virmati lacks. Swarnalatha, Virmati's friend is also a strong and clearheaded woman. She too experiences tension with her parents over the issue of marriage. But unlike Virmati she channelizes her efficiency into a new direction which gives her a sense of group identity. It also breeds ideas of intolerance and violence but what is an attractive fact is that she can frame these

ideas of liberty into her marriage without destroying the structure of the family. Her marriage rests on the condition that it would not frustrate her work.

The fight for independence and an individual identity is still now an unfinished battle and a million dollar question. Throughout this novel Ida's statement echoes that she doesn't want to be like her mother and she wants to claim her liberty and own identity. Ida wants freedom and doesn't want to compromise as did her mother.

The characters shaped by Kapur portray by the adoption of a serious and impulsive approach that question their place and as a consequence attempt to redefine cultural and social stereotypes and values in order to generate a space of their own, which brings a redefinition of their individuality as well as a debate and confrontation to the social context and a customary and powerful patriarchal ideology.

Kapur's protagonist struggle for profession and own identity against the prevailing philosophy domesticity. The story of the novel is a woman torn among family responsibility, the wish for education and illicit love. The search for manage over one's fortune is the key theme. Though India fights for liberty from the British Raj, Virmati fights for the liberty to live life on her terms. The novelist has depicted her protagonists as women caught between the passion of the flesh and a thirst to be part of political and intellectual movements.

Manju Kapur's literary success lies in her being a firm traditionalist while converting the dissimilar phases of national experience into major works of art. Her intellectuality and sophistication do not wear her away from the national tradition. As an author Kapur is extremely fascinated in story and social remark rather than psychological portrayal of her character, multifaceted method or a deep visualization

of life. Her novels give a realistic description of fashionable Indian reality.

In our society, a woman on her way cannot survive outside the system in which a place has been assigned to her, a woman cannot manage. Indian society does not tolerate individualism, except in the case of Sanyasihood. Feminine individualism is not acceptable. Here we can have an example of Shakuntala, Virmati. Shakuntala does not want to marry, she lives a free life. But due to her, her mother suffers a lot and feels helpless. Virmati denies marrying Inderjeet and this becomes a big reason of her helpless condition. And even in the marriage, her qualities, her education are not enough. Even if the girl is good-looking, entry in a respectable house is difficult.

It has become clear what would be the result of women's education in a society where individual freedom is strictly limited. Education contributes to the social promotion of a girl only in as much as it allows her family to find her a better husband, education is not an end in itself but a long term investment.

This is what Manju Kapur has depicted in her novels women's emancipation is no longer to be decided upon by men. It is no longer up to them to decide what a woman can be or not. Manju Kapur's novels show the condition of woman in our society. Though the girl or woman is from a respectable family, good-looking, well-educated still she has to suffer. She remains in the society like a puppet whose strings are in the hands of their destiny. These characters try to liberate themselves from the pangs of orthodoxy but they remain unable to come out of their family, whether their paternal home or in in-law's home, they have to remain dependent on others. They can't take decisions on their own but the decisions of others are enforced on these characters. All the female characters rebel against society or

patriarchal norms to make their own destiny but unfortunately, the condition become worse for them.

Kapur presents the readers with two different categories of women. The traditional women, who adhere to the standards of the society they thrive in, and exercise their agency in a limited fashion. They are juxtaposed the modern women, who not only are aggressive and follow their desires, but also control and impose their agency within the society. Ganga and Kasturi represent the former category, while Swarnalata and Shakuntala are representative of the latter category. One such traditional text, although not as influential as other historical texts but vital nonetheless, is Manusmriti. It has directly or indirectly defined the role of women in the Indian society.

The novel *Difficult Daughters* showcases the gradual progress of the status of Indian women, which is achieved in Ladies Coupé. The *Difficult Daughters*, which observes the decade right after the early 1900s, when the Swadeshi movement was taking place. No longer are women bound to child marriages, or are being burned into the pyre. Although their situation is much better than it was in the 19th century, women continue to be in the 20th and 21st century in India are in a paradoxical situation.

The very title of the novel *Difficult Daughters* is an indication that a woman, who tries to search her identity, is branded as a difficult daughter by the family and the society as well. Jeevan Kumar in his article "Conflict between Family and Self: A Study on Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*" writes, "*Difficult Daughters* is a gripping story that ably captures Virmati's conflict between her duty to family, her desire for education and independence, and her illicit love for a married man" (210).

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Memory and History: A Study of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College(Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	The Buried Giant	12
Three	Arthurian Chivalry	23
Four	Themes and Symbols	34
Five	Summation	50
	Works Cited	

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Memory and History: A Study of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Jeslin Saghana.J during the year 2019-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Ms. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi **Ms. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**

Head of the Department
Guide

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Examiner

Principal

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Memory and History: A Study of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to

Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

Jeslin Saghana. J

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Memory and History: A Study of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*** highlights the theme of memory explored in the novel *The Buried Giant* and how he depicts the rule of King Arthur in England. Ishiguro in his novel *The Buried Giant* delineates how memory and history are important for an individual and a nation to secure, sustain and nurture their relations.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Kazuo Ishiguro, his life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of his work and the novel chosen for the study.

The second chapter **The Buried Giant** discusses how memory is an inevitable part in both personal and public lives, and how memory has the power to distort, build and sustain the relationship of both human beings and nations as well.

The third chapter **Arthurian Chivalry** analyses the novel *The Buried Giant* as a critique of Arthurian chivalry. It highlights the characterisation of Ishiguro which serves as a clear instance of the critique of Arthurian chivalry.

The fourth chapter **Themes and Symbols** discusses various themes and symbols used by Ishiguro in *The Buried Giant*.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary history describes the period or the time frame that is closely connected to the present day. Contemporary literature is defined as literature written after World War II through the current day. Works of this period reflect a society's social and political viewpoints, that is shown through realistic characters and also through connections to current events and socio-economic messages. So, when one thinks of contemporary literature, one cannot simply look at a few themes or settings. Since society changes over time, so do the content and messages of this writing also keeps on changing. When one talks about contemporary literature and its start date, it reminds us of World War II and the events occurred. The horrors of the war, including bombs, ground wars, are the pathways to this type of literature. It is from these real-life themes that one can find the beginning of a new period of writing.

All the works of contemporary literature do not center around war narratives. These works also aim to speak to the injustices in the world and the search for civil rights, the topics and questions that were raised during this traumatic time in world history. The war serves as a catalyst for a shift in the mindset of writers. The authors writing in this period consciously and unconsciously illuminate this shift in thinking through their writing. Some of the notable writers in the contemporary British Literature are Iris Murdoch, Doris Lessing, Margaret Drabble, Julian Barnes, John Fowles, JG Ballard, Angela Carter, Martin Amis, Hilary Mantel, David Lodge, Peter Ackroyd, AS Byatt, Malcom Bradbury, Ian McEwan, Muriel Spark.

Kazuo Ishiguro, a Japanese-born English novelist holds a unique place in the contemporary literature for his lyrical tales of regret fused with optimism. All his novels are written as first-person narratives with unreliable narrators and most of them deal with post-second World War societies, either Japanese or English. Ishiguro's themes include the

unreliability of memory, existential concerns in relation to feeling of guilt, intergenerational familial relationships and a deep reflection on art forms and their function in society. Throughout his literary work, Ishiguro has created a wide range of characters, settings, and plots and has worked in many genres. He has been equally successful in creating female and male central characters. One important recurring theme in all his novels has been the role that memory plays in shaping characters' understanding of themselves. Ishiguro also demonstrates persistent concern with power and the effects of authoritarian ideologies.

Kazuo Ishiguro was born on November 8, 1954 in Nagasaki, Japan. In 1960, when Ishiguro was five years old, his family moved to England after his father (an oceanographer) was offered a job at the National Oceanography Centre. Although his parents spoke Japanese at home to keep their culture and heritage alive, Ishiguro didn't return to Japan until he was in his 30s, after earning his Bachelor of Arts in English and Philosophy, his Master of Arts in Creative Writing, and publishing his first book, *A Pale View of Hills*. In 1983, Ishiguro officially became a citizen of the U.K. Since the publication of his first book in 1982, Ishiguro has written six novels, a collection of short stories, four screenplays, and five songs. Ishiguro received the Booker Prize for his novel [*The Remains of the Day*](#) in 1989, the Order of the British Empire for his literary achievements in 1995, a Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017, and in 2019 received a knighthood for services in literature.

Ishiguro's first two novels have been called his 'Japanese' novel because they are set mostly in Japan. His first novel *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) is narrated by Etsuko, an elderly Japanese woman who married an Englishman and lives in England. Etsuko reminisces about post-war Nagasaki – Ishiguro's birthplace- recounting some of her English daughter Niki after the suicide of her eldest daughter, Keiko. Gradually, Etsuko's memories about a neighbour and

her daughter blend with Etsuko's own life and her feelings of guilt over Keiko's death. Reflecting its title, the novel offers the reader a 'pale view' of Etsuko's past. The readers are not told whether this is because she cannot bear to remember or because some of what she 'remembers' is imaginative invention.

In the second novel *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), the narrator is a painter who reassesses his artistic achievements and his support for the Japanese nationalistic movement that led to Japan's involvement in the Second World War, with its subsequent tragic consequences. Masuji Ono worries that this past may be preventing the marriage of his younger daughter because good families may not want to be associated with him. He feels guilty about his denunciation of a former pupil, and his own inflated ego. By the end, the readers are not sure whether one was as influential as he believes he was or whether he is just an old man convinced of his self-importance. The novel is also a beautiful treatise on painting and, by extension, writing and the different options open to artists, such as whether to pursue aestheticism or political involvement.

The fact that Ishiguro was born in Japan and has a conveniently 'exotic' name was used to market his early novels, but has also pigeonholed him as a 'postcolonial' writer- a racial categorisation since Japan has never been part of the Empire. Besides, Ishiguro left Japan with his family in 1960 at the age of five, speaks only rudimentary Japanese and was brought up and schooled in England. His books have been read as being Japanese and compared to those of Japanese writers such as Masuji Ibuse, Yasunari Kawabata and Junichiro Tanizaki but they owe more to writers such as Chekhov, Dostoevsky and Kafka. In the Anglophone tradition, Ishiguro has parodied P.G. Wodehouse and genres such as detective fiction of the 1930s, while declaring his admiration for American writers such as Raymond Carver, Richard Ford, Ernest

Hemingway and Henry James. He has also pointed to Charlotte Bronte and Charles Dickens as major influences. In addition, his writing has been informed by his MA in Creative writing from the University of East Anglia, where he was taught by Malcom Bradbury and Angela Carter and he shares a concern with expanding the scope of British Literature with fellow writers Timothy Mo and Salman Rushdie, although his approach differs from theirs.

After the Japanese phase, Ishiguro wrote his most popular novel, the best-selling “the Remains of the Day” (1989), which won the Booker Prize and was adapted for the screen. The novel is set in post- Second World war England and follows the trip which Stevens, an old-fashioned Butler, takes in his new American boss’s car to visit a former housekeeper. This relatively straight forward plot is beautifully chiselled into a journey of self-awareness by Stevens’s first-person narrative. Stevens, like all of Ishiguro’s narrators to date, is unreliable not only because he hides things from the reader but also because he deceives himself. He hides behind his professionalism to avoid having to take decisions and make moral judgements. He lives his own life trying to become the perfect Butler and not letting anything or anyone interfere with his job. This is shown to be a fallacy because in pursuit of this impossible perfection he lets all his chances for love and happiness slip away. Besides, he has doubts about his actions (or lack of action) in the light of his previous employer’s appeasement policy and fascist sympathies. The more the reader becomes accustomed to Stevens’s elaborate, somewhat old-fashioned vocabulary and over complicated sentence structures, the easier it becomes to unravel the layers of self-deception. In keeping with Ishiguro’s passion for film and the remarkably cinematic style of his prose, he makes ample use of Steven’s reminiscences, which work as flashbacks.

The Remains of the Day attracted a great deal of critical attention. It is the most 'Japanese' of Ishiguro's books to some reviewers. This, however, is misguided and rather parochial, for Ishiguro is fascinated with a certain type of behaviour which is not privy to any particular nationality. What English critics identify as Japanese is perceived by the rest of the world as quintessentially English. Ishiguro has also been criticized for turning away from his ethnic background and having white protagonists in all his books from *The Remains of the Day* on. A minority of critics mistakenly deplore the fact that he does not write about immigrant experience in Britain, forgetting the fact that Etsuko is an immigrant and Niki, though half-Japanese, is English.

Ishiguro's fourth novel, *The Unconsoled* (1995), provoked a mixed critical response. Most reviewers declared it a failure, but a few thought it a masterpiece. The book is narrated by Ryder, a "renowned pianist" who is in a central European city to give a concert which never takes place. Ryder, however, is not a 'normal' unreliable narrator. He appears not to have a structural memory and never finishes what he sets out to do, distracted by polite requests that he is unable – or unwilling- to refuse. Other characters float in and out of his narrative as if they aware ghosts of his past aspects of his former or future selves. Ryder's troubled past, vacuous present and possible future are thus hinted at in a novel that also addresses its own function in a metanarrative way, as discussions on music echo literary debates about Modernism and Postmodernism. *The Unconsoled* pushes narrative conventions and characterisation to the limits and could perhaps be seen as standing in relation to contemporary literature as "Finnegan's Wake" does to Modernism.

When We were Orphans (2000) seems to be a belated transitional novel between the mainstream phase and the imaginative and technical experimentation of *The Unconsoled*. The

title indicates the novel's concern with family relations and the past, but in this novel, we are taken as far back as the 1930s and, geographically, to England and Shanghai. The main character, Christopher Banks, narrates retrospectively and makes a series of assertions about himself and his past that become less and less of the novel, except for the final section, becomes the mapping of a disintegrating mind. Stylistically the novel is a compromise between the more accessible novels readers are accustomed to and the ground-breaking technique of: *The Unconsoled*. Ishiguro cunningly lures readers into feeling safe, only to lead them into unfamiliar territory when least expected. This is both the strength of this novel and its weakness.

Never Let Me Go (2005), is one of the central novels of our age, in part because Ishiguro perfectly mixes realism and dystopian fantasy to produce an allegory of deep and lingering power. *Never Let Me Go* is set in a boarding school called Hailsham, and flatly narrated, in a style of almost punitive blandness, by a young woman named Kathy. Hailsham seems banally similar to any British school of its ilk, and it's only very gradually that we begin to discern the enormous differences: it is in fact a school for cloned children, whose organs are being harvested for ordinary, luckier, non-cloned British citizens. The cloned children will eventually be "called up," and forced to donate a kidney or a lung. By the fourth "donation," sometime in their early twenties, they will "complete"; they will die, having served their function. *Never Let Me Go* is a beautiful and terrifying book because it works so well at different levels: it is a kind of parody of English boarding-school books; it is a critique of certain emergent medical technologies; and, above all, it is a suggestive allegory of how all of us live.

Nocturnes: Five Stories of Music and Nightfall is a 2009 collection of [short fiction](#) by [Kazuo Ishiguro](#). After six novels, it is Ishiguro's first collection of short stories,

though described by the publisher as a "story cycle". As the subtitle suggests, each of the five stories focuses on music and musicians, and the close of day. All of the stories have unfulfilled potential as a linking theme, tinged with elements of regret. An exploration of love, need, and the ineluctable force of the past, *Nocturnes* reveals these individuals to us with extraordinary precision and subtlety, and with the arresting psychological and emotional detail that has marked all of Kazuo Ishiguro's acclaimed works of fiction.

The Buried Giant (2015) follows an elderly [Briton](#) couple, Axl and Beatrice, living in a fictional post-[Arthurian](#) England in which no-one is able to retain long term memories. After dimly recalling that they might years earlier have had a son, the couple decide to travel to a neighbouring village to seek him out. The book was nominated for the 2016 [World Fantasy Award](#) for best novel, and the 2016 [Mythopoeic Award for Adult Literature](#). It was also placed sixth in the 2016 [Locus Award for Best Fantasy Novel](#). The book has been translated into French, German, Spanish and Italian.

The [Saxons](#) and [Britons](#) live in harmony following the death of [King Arthur](#). Along with everyone else in their community, Axl and Beatrice, an elderly Briton couple, suffer from severe selective amnesia that they call the 'mist'. Although barely able to remember, the couple feel sure that they once had a son, and they decide to travel to a village several days' walk away to seek him out. They stay at a Saxon village where two ogres have dragged off a boy named Edwin. A visiting Saxon warrior, Wistan, kills the ogres and rescues Edwin who is discovered to have a wound, believed to be an ogre-bite. The superstitious villagers attempt to kill the boy, but Wistan rescues him and joins Axl and Beatrice on their journey, hoping to leave Edwin at the son's village. The group heads to a monastery to consult with Jonus, a wise monk, about a pain in Beatrice's side. They meet the elderly [Sir Gawain](#), nephew of [King Arthur](#), who – as is

well known – was tasked decades ago with slaying the she-dragon Querig, but who has never succeeded. Wistan reveals that he was sent by the Saxon king to slay Querig out of concern that she would be used by Lord Brennus, king of the Britons, to kill Saxons.

The travellers are treated with hospitality at the monastery, but are informed by Jonus that most of the monks are corrupt. Sir Gawain has spoken to the abbot, believing he will protect the four. Instead, the abbot informs Lord Brennus who sends soldiers to murder them. As an experienced warrior, Wistanrealises that the monastery was originally built as a fort, and he makes use of its structure to trap and kill the soldiers. Sir Gawain, riding on alone, recalls how, years earlier, King Arthur had ordered the extermination of many Saxon villages. The massacre had been a betrayal of the peace-treaties brokered by Axl, who had at the time been Arthur's envoy (although he has now forgotten it). Arthur also ordered that Querig be brought to the cairn where she now lives, and that a spell be cast turning her breath into an oblivion-inducing mist, causing the Saxons to forget about the massacres. Axl and Beatrice become separated from Wistan and Edwin, and they travel on alone. They are persuaded by a girl to take a poisoned goat to Querig's lair. Sir Gawain joins them and shows the way.

Travelling with Wistan, Edwin has been hearing a voice that he identifies as his lost mother, calling him to her. Wistanrealises that Edwin's wound has been caused by a baby dragon and that Edwin can lead him to Querig. As they approach, Edwin becomes increasingly crazed and has to be restrained. Sir Gawain reveals that his duty was not in fact to slay Querig, but to protect her in order to maintain the mist. Wistan challenges Gawain to a duel and kills him. He proceeds to slay Querig causing Edwin's madness to depart and the mist to dissipate, restoring the people's memories. He declares that "the giant, once well buried, now stirs": his action will cause the old animosities between Saxon and Briton to return, leading to a new

war. Axl and Beatrice are finally able to recall that their son had died many years ago of the plague. They meet a ferryman who offers to row the old couple over to an island where they can be close to him in perpetuity. Normally, he says, married couples have to dwell on the island separately and always apart, but in rare cases couples whose love is deep and profound may remain together. The ferryman tells Axl and Beatrice that they qualify, but as they are about to be rowed over the waves increase and he informs them that he can carry only one person at a time. Axl is suspicious that the ferryman intends to trick them into separating forever, but Beatrice believes the man to be truthful and asks Axl to wait on the shore while she is taken over. The novel ends without resolution, as Axl reluctantly agrees.

In the novel *The Buried Giant*, it had been over 100 years since the Romans left England, leaving the Britons to defend themselves against the Saxons, Germanic tribes who were coming from continental Europe to settle in England. In the year 460, after the deaths of several English kings, there was a rash of particularly violent land-grabs carried out by groups of Saxons, which escalated the tension and mutual hatred between the two groups. Although the existence of King Arthur is a hotly-debated topic among English historians, it is widely believed that he ruled and led armies of Britons in the late-5th and early-6th centuries. One battle in particular, the Battle of Badon, occurred around the year 500 and was particularly bloody, but it resulted in a few years of peace between Britons and Saxons similar to that which is seen in *The Buried Giant*. Ultimately, war did break out between Saxons and Britons again. Despite several periods of peace, violence and tension existed between the two groups until well into the 11th century.

The revelation of long-buried secrets is a favorite theme of Kazuo Ishiguro's and he explores it in some of his other works, including [*Never Let Me Go*](#) and [*The Remains of the*](#)

[Day](#). Sir Thomas Malory's classic collection and retelling of the legend of King Arthur, [Le Morte d'Arthur](#), tells the story of King Arthur's time on the English throne and the stories of his loyal Knights of the Round Table, which includes Sir Gawain, who features prominently in *The Buried Giant*. Richard Yates's novel [Revolutionary Road](#) features a seemingly happy couple with serious marital problems lurking beneath the surface, similar to Axl and Beatrice's marriage in *The Buried Giant*. Additionally, *Possession* by A. S. Byatt involves a quest to discover the hidden secrets and truth about English history, particularly for two 19-century poets whose turbulent affair ran contrary to stereotypical beliefs about sexuality in Victorian England.

According to Washington Post, "*The Buried Giant* has the clear ring of legend, as graceful, original and humane as anything Ishiguro has written...". *The Buried Giant* begins as a couple, Axl and Beatrice, set off across a troubled land of mist and rain in the hope of finding a son they have not seen for years. They expect to face many hazards- some strange and other-worldly- but they cannot yet foresee how their journey will reveal to them dark and forgotten corners of their love for one another.

I have chosen the novel *The Buried Giant* because Ishiguro's novels are narrative masterpieces which transform the genres they tackle. They seem historically 'true' without being historical. They invite us to sympathise with their characters while seeing through their masks. Above all, they provide a floating, imaginative world which is nevertheless very much grounded in universal human concerns. As the New Republic rightly says it is 'Lush and thrilling, rolling the gothic, fantastical, political, and philosophical into one.'

CHAPTER TWO

MEMORIES OF THE PAST: THE BURIED GIANT

Memory is one of the recurrent themes of Ishiguro's novels. Yugin Teo in *Kazuo Ishiguro and Memory* (2014), explores the theme of memory in Ishiguro's novels in the light of Paul Ricoeur's work on memory. Teo argues "the process of looking back on the past and the burden of unresolved events play a crucial role in the narrative structures of Ishiguro's novels." This chapter deals with the theme of memory explored in *The Buried Giant* by Kazuo Ishiguro and how he portrays the memories of the past as the buried giant.

Set in sixth-century Britain where a fragile peace exists between the Saxons and the Britons after the death King Arthur, *The Buried Giant* follows the journey of an elderly Briton couple, Axl and Beatrice. The couple live in a burrow, not unlike those that hobbits live in in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, from where they set off to find their son and venture across treacherous landscapes of monsters, men of questionable moralities and a perpetual mist. The mist seems to cause in everyone a severe but selective amnesia and it is responsible for Axl and Beatrice to barely remember they even have a son. Along the way, they find

companions: a warrior called Wistan and a boy, Edwin, believed to have been bitten by an ogre. The couple also encounter Sir Gawain, one of King Arthur's knights, tasked with the slaying of a dragon. The couple also find out that the mist that makes them forget, originates from a sleeping dragon called Querig, the same dragon Gawain thinks he is supposed to kill.

In truth, however, Sir Gawain's task is to protect the dragon. The mist turns out to be a form of protection devised by Arthur to prevent vengeance from the Saxons. The mist makes them forget the atrocities committed by Arthur and his soldiers, the massacres of Saxon villages that ended the peace treaties that had been brokered by Axl, revealed to be one of Arthur's companions. Wistan ends up killing Sir Gawain and Querig, which dissipates the mist and makes everyone remember, leading to new wars. The pivotal moment is when the protagonists are required to weigh whether remembering is worth the following violence, and they have to make a choice on the matter. The dissipation of the mist also leads Axland Beatrice to remember that the son they had set out to find had died of the plague much earlier.

The Buried Giant is notable among Ishiguro's works in that it is the only novel that is not written from a first-person narrative point of view. This was probably a choice that serves to distance the reader from the events, fortifying the theme of forgetting and feelings of being lost. The reception of *The Buried Giant* has been mostly positive. For example, Alex Preston describes it in *The Guardian* as:

a profound – and compulsively readable – examination of memory and guilt, of the way we recall past trauma en masse. It is also an extraordinarily atmospheric and compulsively readable tale, to be devoured in a single gulp. *The Buried Giant* is *Game of Thrones* with a conscience, *The Sword in the Stone* for the age

of the trauma industry, a beautiful, heartbreaking book about the duty to remember and the urge to forget.

Many scholars have made studies in the novel *The Buried Giant*. But most of these theses have studied the theme of memory explored in the novel. Other than the theme of memory there are also some theses done on the theme of history and especially of Britain. Catherine Charlwood's "National Identities, Personal Crises: Amnesia in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*" pays attention to the novel's way of addressing Britain:

Much has been made of Ishiguro as a writer of world literature, and he himself has struggled with the fact of having to 'set a novel somewhere' [. . .] *TBG* is definitively set in Britain, albeit one so ancient as to be amorphous to the modern reader [. . .] In *TBG*, then, Ishiguro tackles mythical notions of England head-on by setting it in a mythological version of Britain (Charlwood 29).

"Navigating Wonder: The Medieval Geographies of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*" by Matthew Vernon and Margaret Miller approaches the concept of the formation of British identity and its reflection in the usage of "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight". This article argues that tactics used by "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" are used in *The Buried Giant* to destabilize the clarity of national origins. In this thesis, the emphasis is on the more general use of the myth of King Arthur and the post-Arthurian heterotopia as well as their effect on the novel as a critique of the hegemonic concept of national identity.

The novel opens by the narrator's description of Britain:

You would have searched a long time for the sort of winding lane or tranquil meadow for which England later became celebrated. There were instead miles of desolate, uncultivated land; here and there rough-hewn paths over craggy

hills or bleak moorland. Most of the roads left by the Romans would by then have become broken or overgrown, often fading into wilderness. Icy fogs hung over rivers and marshes, serving all too well the ogres that were then still native to this land. (3)

The subsequent clues in the novel help the readers to deduce that the year is approximately 450 A.D. Despite our unnamed narrator's anthropological tone, readers can understand that they are not in England as it actually was then. But it is the England that was imagined seven centuries later by Geoffrey of Monmouth and the other mythologizers who gave us King Arthur, Sir Gawain, and the wizard Merlin. Our guides through the craggy hills and bleak moors of the medieval countryside are an elderly couple named Axl and Beatrice. They live in poverty, ostracized by the rest of their village, and appear to have sunk into a grim senility. They cannot remember basic facts about their past: Have they always lived in this village? Did they have children? We soon learn that this smothering forgetfulness does not afflict them alone. Their entire village is amnesic:

In this community the past was rarely discussed. I do not mean that it was taboo. I mean that it had somehow faded into a mist as dense as that which hung over the marshes. It simply did not occur to these villagers to think about the past—even the recent one.

The couple often get into argument when Axl tries to share his vague memory of having children of their own. Axl has a vague picture of certain incidents of the past. For instance, the woman with long red hair, the fight between the villagers regarding the story told by the two shepherds, regarding which he has only a hazy memory. However, Beatrice does not have the memory of such incidents. For most of the novel, though, we are with the old man Axl, sharing

in his thoughts and his struggle to remember. Axl cannot quite recall how he became the isolated creature who shares an unlighted hovel with his wife, Beatrice, though he does know that he once had a son and a life outside the miserable hillside warren where they live. Axl and Beatrice are old enough to feel a sense of a history beyond the daily life of their community of Britons, even if they cannot articulate it, and they set off on a journey – ostensibly to visit their son, but really in search of their own past.

Ishiguro studies the question if all the human beings are the sum of their memory in *The Buried Giant*. But he is just as interested in collective memory - What does a society choose to remember? George Santayana is credited with coining the historian's mantra, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." *The Buried Giant* poses a heretical counterargument: Might human civilization, in order to prosper, have no choice but to erase the past? As the couple Axl and Beatrice sets on a journey to their son's village, they decide to stay for a night in a Saxon village. It is only there they come to know the reason for their forgetfulness is the mist. However, the details about the mist and Querig- the she-dragon are presented in an obscure manner. When Beatrice questions Ivor, a Briton living in a Saxon village, about the "sickness" that come over them, he recalls the words told by a stranger who visited their village a year before as:

The stranger thought it might be God himself had forgotten much from our
pasts, events far distant, events of the same day. And if a thing is not in God's
mind, then what chance of it remaining in those of mortal men? (73)

When the couple travel along with Wistan, a Saxon warrior, to the mountain road, Axl gets the fragments of memory of the incidents of the past. He remembers the day when he met Beatrice in the market place, how he fought with a man who flirted with Beatrice. Master

Wistan often puts on a scrutinizing look on Axl's face. The narrator says that he restricts himself from speaking of his thoughts about Axl. Through this the readers can guess that there is something about Axl that Master Wistan knows and also puts the question for what reason does he refrain to ask it to Axl. The narrator's hint about the significance of Axl's past is highlighted when Sir Gawain also guesses who Axl was and refrains to tell it. When Master Wistan and Sir Gawain is questioned by Beatrice, Wistan answers as follows:

Forgive me mistress. This awakens so many memories, though each seems like some restless sparrow I know will flee any moment into breeze. Your husband's face has all day promised me an important remembrance, and if truth be told, that was a reason for my proposing to travel with you, though I sincerely wish to see you both safely through these wild roads. (123)

Wistan tells Axl that Edwin came to him earlier to report that he had heard moans "as of a man in pain" coming from a nearby shelter, and had noticed blood, both fresh and old, by a locked chamber. Axl tells him that it may be that a monk fell down the narrow stairway, which Wistan agrees might be the case. Still, Wistan wishes he had his sword nearby and mentions that the "walls whisper to [him] of days gone by." Axl asks what he means and Wistan explains that the building had not always been a monastery but was very likely a Saxon fort with traps to keep the inhabitants safe and trap invaders. Wistan states, "This is today a place of peace and prayer, yet you needn't gaze so deep to find blood and terror."

Axl shudders at Wistan's description but realizes it's the truth. Wistan goes on to say that, in times of war, the Saxon families would have stood in the yard to "witness the invaders squeal like trapped mice" as they were slaughtered at the gates. Axl disagrees and says they would have hidden and prayed to God because such people "would take no pleasure in

bloodshed, even of the enemy.” Wistan, however, argues that they were a people “at the end of a brutal road, having seen their children and kin mutilated and ravished” and, although the fort would have been their final retreat before being overtaken, they would have cherished the sight of the invaders being killed. Still Axl disbelieves that it’s possible “to hate so deeply” for something that hadn’t happened yet and insists they would have held out hope. Once again, Wistan says that Axl is wrong and that he himself has seen “dark hatred as bottomless as the sea” in the elderly and children alike, and felt this hatred himself.

Axl, in order to end the argument, says he is glad that the idea will never be put to the test. Wistan looks “strangely” at Axl before apologizing for “questioning that good knight” about whether or not he recognized Axl. Axl tells him that he took “no offense” and has no doubt that Wistan made a simple mistake. Wistan tells Axl that he mistook him for a man who was “a thing of wonder” to him when he was a child and who often came to the village to talk with the elders and move amongst them, even though he was a Briton. This, however, was before Wistan was taken by soldiers and trained as a warrior by Britons. Wistan tells Axl that seeing him the first time brought back memories of this man from his childhood, but he admits he was mistaken.

Ishiguro’s withholding of narrative information makes us share the plight of his characters as they struggle with memory and understanding. Sometimes objects, buildings or geographical features tell us more than the actions of the characters: the couple walk carefully over a hill where they know a giant is buried; the ruins of a Roman villa indicate the loss of another civilisation centuries before; a tower in the monastery grounds reveals that the monastery has been a Saxon fort. When Wistan fights off the troops of Lord Brennus, he puts

the tower to its original use, but the action occurs offstage and the details are delivered to us after Wistan has escaped.

In the final chapter it is disclosed to the readers that Axl that he had also been a knight of King Arthur and was the one who brokered the treaty with the Saxons that King Arthur broke. It's also revealed that Wistan had seen Axl when he was a knight and knew he was the one who made the treaty, which is why he lets Axl go in peace. Axl remembers some of the details from his time in King Arthur's army, namely that he had been a diplomat and hated the violence of his companion, Harvey. When Axl and Beatrice finally make it to the boatman to take the test to go to the island, Axl reveals the anger he harbored against Beatrice for having an affair and chooses to let her go to the island alone even though he still loves her.

In this novel, *The Buried Giant*, Kazuo Ishiguro addresses the question of whether the past and its wrongs are best left forgotten in the interest of peace, or if it's better to rediscover bad memories to uncover the truth and achieve justice. Axl and Beatrice know that having their memories restored means they will remember all the bad parts of their marriage as well as the good, but they're confident that their love is strong enough to survive remembering the bad. Without their memories, Axl and Beatrice only know what they feel for each other from one moment to the next, and because that love is strong, they want to remember everything else they've shared. Beatrice says, "Axl and I would remember our lives together, whatever its shape, for it's been a thing dear to us," which shows her willingness to accept the bad memories along with the good. Furthermore, Axl accepts that there will be bad memories, but for him those bad memories are made beautiful by being part of the greater good, shown by his assertion that "black shadows make part of its whole." Even so, Axl insists that Beatrice make him a promise: "keep what you feel for me this moment always in your heart." Although they

both accept that not everything will have been perfect between them in the past, what they most value and fear losing is the present.

Axl and Beatrice are confident in the strength of their love to withstand regaining all of their memories. At the same time the couple also worry about what restoring memories will mean for the positive relationship between the Saxons and Britons. Speaking of England's landscape, Sir Gawain tells Axl it's a "fine green valley," but that "not far beneath the daisies and buttercups [...] lie the remains of old slaughter." Similarly, one need not dig far into the pasts of the Saxons and Britons to find treachery, hatred, and violence, even though they now live in peace. However, that peace was only achieved by forcing forgetfulness on the people. When Sir Gawain pleads with Wistan to leave this country to rest in forgetfulness, he also means that Wistan should not bring back memories because forgetfulness is the only way to ensure continued peace. Wistan, however, scorns the Britons for achieving peace only by forcing forgetfulness and allowing wrongdoers to go unpunished after the massacre. For Wistan, memory is the surest road to winning justice for the slaughtered.

Axl and Beatrice's worst fears regarding the Britons and Saxons seem likely to come true in the end. Unfortunately, their one chance for happiness seems to have been reliant on forgetting the past despite their belief that their love would stand strong. As Axl and Beatrice prepare to help Wistan slay Querig and restore their memories, Axl becomes hesitant and wonders "what good's a memory's returning from the mist if it's only to push away another?" This reveals his growing fear that bad memories of the past will obscure their current happiness. Furthermore, Beatrice has already begun to experience "remembrances to make [her] shrink from [Axl]." Although she still has no definite idea of what their past lives were like, this indicates that some of those bad memories are worse and more powerful than they

previously imagined. Ultimately, it is Axl who reveals, and seemingly succumbs to, the intensity of his past anger and resentment at Beatrice. After revealing his long-held resentment of Beatrice for having an affair, Axl initially holds out hope that they can go to the island together, but is soon persuaded to leave Beatrice to be taken to the island (which represents the afterlife) alone.

Ishiguro writes about a time that remains a mystery to historians – a matter of archaeology and legend. In an interview with Alex Clark in the *Guardian*, Ishiguro makes explicit that he is interested in the moment before the Saxons fought and conquered the Britons, and interested in speculating about how that war might have emerged from Arthur's previous conquest. The absence of recorded history opens a space for speculation, even fantasy. In, *The Buried Giant*, the Saxons – Wistan and Edwin – represent the future, while their Briton travelling companions – Axl, Beatrice and Gawain – have only that dimly-remembered Arthurian past. The release of the Buried Giant carries with it, resentments, knowledge of past atrocities and hatred, which we know will be directed at the Briton oppressors.

The idea that the maintenance of memory may bring brutal consequences has wider application. It also may destroy personal relations, as Axl and Beatrice fear that their feeling for each other is challenged by the intimations of an angry and bitter past. For all its dressing in fantasy, the novel asks serious questions about the consequences of nursing grievances about the past. But as the hags harassing Gawain know, without memory, good or bad, human beings are nothing. The Evening Standard rightly reviews *The Buried Giant* as “wonderfully strange... *The Buried Giant* tells us that for nations, just as for individuals, there may be some memories so painful and damaging that they are dangerous to face...” This chapter analyses how Ishiguro

highlights memory as an inevitable part for individuals and nations to construct, sustain and withstand their relations.

CHAPTER THREE

ARTHURIANCHIVALRY

Ishiguro sets his novel *The Buried Giant* in the Arthurian England. He describes the landscapes, the unsettled places of the Britons and the Saxons, and the destruction the Britons caused in the Saxon villages. Unlike many other texts that celebrate King Arthur's reign, valour, bravery and the nobility of knighthood, this novel criticizes the chivalry of Arthur. It throws a vivid picture of the massacre caused by King Arthur in the Saxon villages by breaking the treaty. This chapter discusses Ishiguro's critique of Arthurian chivalry in *The Buried Giant*.

With its ogres and giants, magic mists and she-dragons, Kazuo Ishiguro's representation of knighthood and the chivalric code of honor in *The Buried Giant* placed the novel within the long-standing tradition of Arthurian literature. Rather than simply adding to the historical, literary discourse, however, Ishiguro's novel changed the conversation entirely by offering a critique of the previous literature; the deeds of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table were richly romanticized and glorified in medieval texts like *Sir Gawain and the*

Green Knight, *Yvain: The Knight of the Lion*, and *Le Morte D'Arthur*, creating an unrealistic literary representation of knighthood and chivalry. Ishiguro's portrayal of Sir Gawain and his invention of Wistan and Axl offered a critique not only on Arthurian literature's idealization of the knightly code of chivalry, but also on the hypocritical nature of knighthood itself. In Sydney Review of Books, Susan Lever highlights the setting of the novel as:

The post-Arthurian setting allows Ishiguro to lead us from a verifiable historical world to the mythical. It invites us into the twilight world where legend and history are mixed, and we may find ourselves looking for plausible explanations for the ogres, and beasts, or the creature with the head of serpent and body of plucked chicken that infects Edwin with an urgent attraction for the she-dragon. At the same time, there is a sense that this fantasy may be part of our own lost memories – of the unrecorded history of the British people.

The Anglo-Saxon pagans and Christian Britons engaged in a brutal, seemingly never-ending war, following the Roman evacuation of Britain in the 5th and 6th centuries. This war gave way to various myths and legends regarding a brave and victorious Christian warrior, now known as King Arthur. While some accounts of Arthur have been traced back to Gildas, a sixth century monk who wrote of an unnamed leader who resisted the Anglo-Saxon invaders, the legendary king was not mentioned by name until Nennius, a ninth century monk and author of *Historia Brittonum*, writes of “the magnanimous Arthur” (50). It was Nennius's account of the fierce fighter named Arthur that much of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* was attributed. Drawing from Welsh legend and myth, chronicles of his contemporaries like Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury, Biblical history, folk-

tales, the Carolingian cycle, Gildas' works, and, especially, Nennius's *Historia*, Geoffrey of Monmouth disregarded the (already blurry) line between fact and fiction to cement in Britain's history a Christ-like saviour of a conflicted nation in the form of King Arthur Pendragon. The legend of Arthur, already highly fictionalized and grandiose, became popularized, appealing to contemporary ideals regarding honor, loyalty, and duty, and out of the tales of Arthur and the Round Table arose the ultimate guide for courtly conduct and knighthood: the code of chivalry.

The code of chivalry defined the standards to which knights must hold themselves. Full of ideals regarding honor and bravery, the moral code extended beyond the rules of mortal combat to include guidelines for general behavior and conduct. Knights must have not only been courageous, honest, and merciful, but must have also carried themselves with dignity, loyalty, and gallantry towards women. The chivalric code was rigorous, and to fail to maintain the code meant to lose all honor and forfeit one's title as knight (Geoffrey; Nennius). In *The Buried Giant*, Ishiguro explored knighthood and the code of chivalry in the final, peaceful days of the unified Britain brought about by King Arthur's rule. Ishiguro rendered two contrasting representations of knighthood and warrior culture in the characters Sir Gawain of Arthurian legend (in this version, he was King Arthur's nephew) and Wistan, a Saxon soldier. Throughout the novel, these characters remained in conflict with one another, and an examination of their contradictory actions provided Ishiguro's thesis on knighthood: the code, impossible to maintain in war, was hypocritical and unjust. In one of his interviews Ishiguro talks about his inspiration for *The Buried Giant* and the Arthur he intends to present in his novel:

The Arthur in my book is a quasi-historical Arthur. It's possible that there is a real historical figure upon which the King Arthur myth is based. And it's that figure, a military leader, who was around in that time who perhaps- led the resistance fighting on the part of the Britons [the indigenous people] against the migrants who were in increasing numbers taking over parts of the island. These are the people who later became the English: they basically took over the whole country. So, a lot of people think that that is there's a historical basis for the Arthur legend it was this great leader who, for maybe a generation or two, managed to impose a kind of a peace and stability, but a very, very uneasy one as a result of having won major military victories. And then eventually that peace crumbled and the Anglo- Saxons took over Britain and the place became English. It's that Arthur that I'm interested in rather than the Arthur of the Holy Grail legends.

With regard to the characters of Wistan and Sir Gawain, it was made evident immediately (and repeatedly) in the novel that one was a knight and the other merely a warrior. Sir Gawain referred constantly to himself (and was indeed referred to by others) as a knight of Arthur. He refused to be known as anything else and demanded that others acknowledge his status:

"I am a knight and a Briton... This sword and armour I carry only out of duty to my king, the great and beloved Arthur." (104)

"I'm Gawain, right enough, nephew of the great Arthur who once ruled these lands with such wisdom and justice." (107)

“Sir, let me remind you, I’m a knight of Arthur.” (119)

Further, the very use of his title “Sir” was indicative of his status as a knight. Yet, Wistan, who eventually defeated Sir Gawain in combat, never referred to himself as a knight, only once or twice describing himself as a warrior:

“The name is Wistan, sir, from the fenlands in the east, traveling these parts on my king’s errand” (106).

“I’m Wistan, sir, a warrior from the east” (118).

Additionally, through Axl’s third person perspective, the reader’s first glimpses of Sir Gawain and Wistan illustrated Ishiguro’s favourable opinion of warriors and critical opposition to knights. Axl first met Wistan in a small Saxon village, while he was preparing to set out on a mission to rescue the boy Edwin from ogres:

“It was the bearing of the man, the way he moved and held himself, that so set him apart from those around him. ‘No matter that he tries to pass himself off as an ordinary Saxon,’ Axl thought, ‘this man is a *warrior*’” (53).

While walking on the road with Wistan, the boy, and his wife Beatrice, Axl came across Sir Gawain, and his initial sighting of the knight revealed “two metal legs stuck out stiffly onto the grass in a childlike way” and attached to them a “whiskery old fool” (103). The contrast between the supposedly noble knight and the brave Saxon warrior was apparent instantaneously both in the men’s designation and physicality.

The tension between Wistan and Sir Gawain manifested not only when Wistan's quest to kill the dragon Querig, whom Sir Gawain protected, was revealed, but also in their contradictory behaviours. Sir Gawain, great knight of Arthur that he was, boasted consistently of his exploits:

“I'm a knight well trained...by the great Arthur, who taught me to face all manner of challenge with gladness.... Like all who stood with Arthur, sir, I've faced beezlebubs and monsters as well as the darkest intents of men, and always upheld my great king's example even in the midst of ferocious conflict” (165-166).

Sir Gawain wished for all to know of his heroic deeds, thus proving himself and validating his honour as a knight, whereas Wistan maintained an air of humility, allowing his actions to speak for themselves. When he returned to the Saxon village, having defeated the ogres and rescued Edwin, the warrior was greeted by Axl, who exclaimed:

“My wife and I are honoured to meet a man of such courage, generosity and skill. Your deeds last night were remarkable” (71).

But Wistan respectfully declined the praise:

“‘My deeds were nothing extraordinary, sir, no more my skill.’ The warrior's voice, as before, was gentle and a smile hovered about his eyes. ‘I had good fortune last night, and besides, was ably helped by brave comrades’” (71).

The warrior was modest in the face of praise while the honourable knight demanded it. Sir Gawain's and Wistan's conflicting natures became further evident with regard to their respective receptions of Axl.

Through the narrator, the reader gets to know that both Sir Gawain and Wistan knew Axl, who did not recognize either as his memories had faded from the mist. When Wistan first realized that Axl was familiar to him, he apologized for his staring and assumed that he must be mistaken:

“Forgive me, mistress. This country awakens so many memories...
Your husband's face has all day promised me an important remembrance”
(108).

Wistan was truthful and forthright about his suspicions that Axl was a man whom he had met as a child, and later when Axl's memories began to return, Wistan's theory was confirmed. However, Sir Gawain, who knew Axl intimately as brothers-in-arms, blatantly lied about their past relationship:

“...as he gazed into Axl's face, his expression changed to one of surprise—even
of shock... ‘I don't believe this gentleman and I met till today’” (108).

In accordance with the code of knighthood, there was no honor in lying, yet Gawain had no qualms about doing so and did not attest to the truth until he was forced to do so just before the memory-defying mist was lifted.

Ishiguro painted Wistan and Gawain as polar opposites. Whereas Gawain held the title of knight, it was Wistan who was, ironically, the nobler of the two. Ishiguro's condemnation of Gawain as a knight of Arthur stemmed from the irreconcilable nature of war and the code of chivalry. The realities of the war between the Saxons and Britons were such that there was no honour involved. At the monastery, which was once a Saxon hillfort, Wistan revealed to Axl the hidden traps and defenses which were once used against the invading Britons. There were two gates, and,

“[t]hrough this watergate would be let past, quite deliberately, a measured number of the enemy. Then the watergate would close on those following. Now those isolated between the two fates, in that space just there, would find themselves outnumbered, and once against, attacked from above. They would be slaughtered” (141).

Wistan informed Axl that the Saxon villagers, having fled their homes, would have watched the British slaughter with delight, for they had suffered gravely at the hands of Arthur and his men. The Saxons had witnessed “their children and kin mutilated and ravished,” their infants “bloodied toys kicked about these cobbles” by the Britons who took “turns to rape young girls even as they lie dying of their wounds” (141). Wistan described the trap set by the Britons to get the Saxons slaughtered with much hatred for them:

“I’ve seen dark hatred as bottomless as the sea on the faces of old women and tender children, and some days felt such hatred myself.” (162)

These horrible actions—all performed by knights and soldiers of Arthur’s court—exposed the hypocritical nature of knighthood. There was no honor or mercy in the massacre of innocents, no bravery in fighting those who could not defend themselves. Moreover, it was later unveiled that Axl, as a knight of Arthur, had sworn a truce with the Saxons to spare their innocents on the legendary king’s behalf—a truce which Arthur and Gawain knowingly violated.

Ishiguro explored Gawain’s complicity and guilt of the Saxon massacres through a series of deranged, stream-of-conscious monologues. As Wistan was tasked to kill the Sir Gawain’s dragon charge, Gawain called on British soldiers to kill the Saxon warrior. Seeking out another to slay one’s enemy was a grave act of cowardice according to the code of knighthood. However, Gawain attempted to deflect his cowardly behaviour by providing the weak claim that the British Lord Brennus had past transgressions with Wistan which took precedent over his quarrels with the Saxon. Further, by drawing the British soldiers to the monastery, Gawain put Wistan’s companions—Axl and Beatrice—in harm’s way. Realizing his error, Gawain assisted in their escape at the last moment. While fleeing through a secret tunnel, the group discovered the lair of a great beast filled with the bones of his many victims. Beatrice’s and Axl’s startled reactions to the mountains of bones caused Gawain to see only suspicion and threat. He began to ramble against the perceived accusations:

“What are you suggesting, sir? Skulls? I saw no skulls! ...Your suggestions are unwarranted, sir! An insult to all who ever stood alongside the great Arthur! And am I not here now to save you?” (169).

His guilt-ridden monologues continued for several moments before he exclaimed,

“What do you suggest, mistress? That *I* committed this slaughter?” (172).

Looking at the dozens of corpses, he confessed his culpability:

“Beneath our soil lie the remains of old slaughter. Horace and I, we’ve grown weary of it. Weary and we no longer young” (171) and aimed to repay his dishonor by rescuing the couple, “Did I not lead you to safety?” (180).

Sir Gawain’s monologues laid bare a man who was deeply disturbed by his past and by his own actions. Even though he boasted of the honour of his position as a knight of Arthur, he couldn’t boast of his actions. Since his actions were disgraceful, he was defensive. Gawain’s knowledge of this disgrace and shame was evident in the fact that he protected the she-dragon as its breath erased the memory of their horrible actions in the past. This in itself was a further act of cowardice as Arthur and his men refused to face the consequences of their deeds. Instead, they chose to hide what they had done not only from the Saxons, but also from their fellow Britons. This dishonour, the savage massacres of Saxon innocents, and Sir Gawain’s guilt and shame all illustrated the contemporary faults of the code of chivalry. The realities of war were such that maintaining such a code was impossible. Yet the knights who failed to do so could not face their disgrace and chose to falsely retain the status and air of a noble knight, in spite of their dishonorable actions. In toto, the code of chivalry, Ishiguro claimed, was not a code of honour, but rather a code of hypocrisy and deceit.

In this novel *The Buried Giant*, Kazuo Ishiguro added to and contradicted the literary tradition of Arthurian legend. Through his historical novel, Ishiguro offered a critique not only on Arthurian literature’s idealization of the knightly code of honour, but also on knighthood itself, that unattainable epitome of honour in war. By highlighting the impossible standards of the knighthood code of chivalry in the face of the savage realities of war, Ishiguro critiqued knighthood as being richly romanticized and glorified in other Arthurian texts. Ishiguro’s representation of Sir Gawain as a hypocritical knight contrasted with Wistan, the humble

warrior who maintained honor but understood and acknowledged the limits of chivalry in wartime.

Throughout the novel one can find Ishiguro's critique of the Arthurian chivalry through the contrasts in the character and demeanour of Master Wistan and Sir Gawain. Unlike many other texts that created an unrealistic representation of knighthood and chivalry, *The Buried Giant* exhumed the hypocrisy and deceit buried in the name of honour and pride. This chapter has highlighted the Arthurian chivalry that is thrown a different light by Ishiguro.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEMES AND SYMBOLS

Ishiguro has explored many themes and motifs in this novel *The Buried Giant*. He has also used many symbols to intensify the main theme of the novel, that is memory. This chapter analyses the themes and symbols in this novel, which the author has used to weave the story of an elderly couple and an entire nation. Present events, triggering the suppressed and painful personal memories are the foci of several Ishiguro novels. "Memory names the mechanism by

which our present is indentured to the past,” says Sigmund Freud. Memories’ potential to distort the past is also implied in his novels. Yugin Teo, for instance, in *Kazuo Ishiguro and Memory* (2014) explores the theme of memory in Ishiguro’s novels in the light of Paul Ricoeur’s work on memory. Teo argues that memory “is often linked with characters who have had something gone wrong in their lives, and are compelled for various reasons to revisit the past in an attempt to right this wrong” (7). Teo establishes connections between the theme of memory and characterization, and by extension narrative techniques used by Ishiguro.

The narrators looking back at their collapsed lives and recounting their stories are also common in the novels of Ishiguro in line with the theme of memory. Indeed, all of Ishiguro’s novels feature an unreliable narrator, as a consequence of which his fiction has frequently been an object of narratological inquiry. He is also renowned for his unique prose style, on which Ishiguro comments as follows:

The language I use tends to be the sort that actually suppresses meaning and tries to hide away meaning rather than chase after something just beyond the reach of words. I’m interested in the way words hide meaning. I suppose I like to have as spare, tight structure because I don’t like to have this impoverished feeling remain in my work. (Vorda and Herzinger 135-36)

According to Wong, Ishiguro’s characters are “carrying complicated states of being” and they have “an important didactic function for understanding human emotion”, which is disclosed in their response to historical and personal events in their lifetimes (*Kazuo Ishiguro* 16-17). Through his employment of hypertextuality, Ishiguro critically explores the ways in which the Arthurian romance contribute to the construction of English national identity at

certain historical conjunctures, and he calls for a reconsideration of the concept of English national identity at present.

Lost memories and the fight to get them back is the most pervasive theme in *The Buried Giant*. In the novel, only a handful of people know that Merlin cursed the breath of Querig to create a mysterious mist which makes everyone forget the past—namely the fact that King Arthur broke his treaty with the Saxons. While the mysterious mist creates peace, it also makes people forget the details of their personal histories. Axl and Beatrice have been married for many years and yearn to remember what their life together was like in the past. Wistan, a Saxon warrior, accepts their company and help on his quest to slay Querig, which will restore everyone's memories. As Axl and Beatrice find out, however, not all memories are good, and some even have the power to reintroduce war and slaughter to a peaceful land. In the novel *The Buried Giant*, Kazuo Ishiguro addresses the question of whether the past and its wrongs are best left forgotten in the interest of peace, or if it is better to rediscover bad memories to uncover the truth and achieve justice.

Axl and Beatrice know that when their memories are restored means they will remember the bad parts of their marriage as well as the good. But they are confident that their love is strong enough to survive remembering the bad. Without their memories, Axl and Beatrice only know what they feel for each other from one moment to the next. Since their love is strong, they want to remember everything else they've shared. Beatrice says, "Axl and I would remember our lives together, whatever its shape, for it's been a thing dear to us." This shows her willingness to accept the bad memories along with the good. Furthermore, Axl accepts that there will be bad memories, but for him those bad memories are made beautiful by being part of the greater good. Even so, Axl insists that Beatrice makes him a promise. He asks

Beatrice to keep what she feels for him that moment always in her heart. Although they both accept that not everything will have been perfect between them in the past, what they most value and fear losing is the present. This is evident in the conversation of Axl and Beatrice:

But Axl, we can't remember those days. Or any of the years between. We don't remember our fierce quarrels or the small moments we enjoyed and treasured. We don't remember our son or why he's away from us.

We can make all those memories come back, princess. Besides, the feeling in my heart for you will be there just the same, no matter what I remember or forget. Don't you feel the same, princess?

I do, Axl. But then again, I wonder if what we feel in our hearts today isn't like these raindrops still falling on us from the soaked leaves above, even though the sky itself long stopped raining. I'm wondering if without our memories, there's nothing for it but for our love to fade and die. (51)

Despite the couple's confidence in the strength of their love to withstand regaining all of their memories, Axl and Beatrice worry about what restoring memories will mean for the positive relationship between the Saxons and Britons. Speaking of England's landscape, Sir Gawain tells Axl it's a "fine green valley," but that "not far beneath the daisies and buttercups [...] lie the remains of old slaughter." Similarly, one need not dig far into the pasts of the Saxons and Britons to find treachery, hatred, and violence, even though they now live in peace. However, that peace was only achieved by forcing forgetfulness on the people. When Sir Gawain pleads with Wistan to leave this country to rest in forgetfulness, he also means that Wistan should not bring back memories because forgetfulness is the only way to ensure

continued peace. Wistan, however, scorns “the drawing of a veil over the foulest deeds.” He can’t accept achieving peace only by forcing forgetfulness and allowing wrongdoers to go unpunished after committing “the foulest deeds.” For Wistan, memory is the surest road to winning justice for the slaughtered.

Towards the end of the novel, Axl and Beatrice’s worst fears regarding the Britons and Saxons seem likely to come true. Unfortunately, their only chance for happiness seems to have been reliant on forgetting the past despite their belief that their love would stand strong. As Axl and Beatrice prepare to help Wistan slay Querig and restore their memories, Axl becomes hesitant and wonders “what good’s a memory’s returning from the mist if it’s only to push away another?” This reveals his growing fear that bad memories of the past will obscure their current happiness. Furthermore, Beatrice has already begun to experience remembrances to distance herself from Axl. Although she still has no definite idea of what their past lives were like, this indicates that some of those bad memories are worse and more powerful than they previously imagined. Ultimately, it is Axl who reveals, and seemingly succumbs to, the intensity of his past anger and resentment at Beatrice. After revealing his long-held resentment of Beatrice for having an affair, Axl initially holds out hope that they can go to the island together, but is soon persuaded by his resentment to leave Beatrice to be taken to the island (which represents the afterlife) alone. Remembering has different results for everyone in this novel: Axl and Beatrice split up, the Saxons get justice, and the Britons are held accountable for their wrongs. The variety and complexity of these outcomes leaves the question of whether some things are best left forgotten, and Ishiguro leaves this unanswered for the reader to form his or her own opinion.

Ishiguro takes the readers back to England in the years following the death of King Arthur. A mysterious mist created by the breath of Querig, the last dragon, has permeated the land and made nearly everyone forget the past, including the bloody wars King Arthur (a Briton) led against the Saxons. With this forgetfulness comes peace: Saxons and Britons live side by side with no trouble. Axl and Beatrice, an old married couple who are Britons, leave their home in search of their lost son. On the way, they meet Wistan, a Saxon warrior, who wants to slay Querig and who retains a lot of his memories. They also meet Sir Gawain, an Arthurian knight whose secret duty is to protect Querig and, therefore, peace in England. If Wistan slays the dragon, people will gradually regain their memories of the past, including the fact that King Arthur broke the treaty between Britons and Saxons not to kill innocent women and children. Through this tenuous balance between upholding peace and unleashing chaos, Ishiguro explores the fragility of peace after civil war and challenges traditional beliefs about the strength of forgiveness to withstand calls for vengeance.

The detailed long-term memories are retained only by some characters. But most of the characters realize that they are forgetting things that they supposed to remember. Though there is peace because of forgetting, the people are still haunted by what they don't remember, revealing the continued existence of fear and tension even in peacetime. Axl and Beatrice are Britons, which means they belonged to the side that committed the worst of the atrocities during the war. While pondering the cause of their forgetfulness, Beatrice theorizes that "God's so deeply ashamed of us, of something we did, that he's wishing himself to forget," indicating that she has some sense that they had done wrong in the past even though she doesn't remember what it was. Wistan, a Saxon, takes another view: he knows that the Britons did something unforgiveable and believes they are also at the root of the forgetting. He says "isn't it a strange

thing when a man calls another brother who only yesterday slaughtered his children? And yet this is the very thing Arthur appears to have accomplished.” This shows that Wistan, and perhaps other Saxons, continue to be suspicious of the Britons. Peace exists in England, but these two divergent opinions on why everyone has forgotten the past (the Britons attributing it to God because He’s ashamed and the Saxons believing King Arthur did something wrong) reveals unresolved tension that threatens to boil over.

Sir Gawain reveals that King Arthur ordered Merlin, a wizard, to cast a spell on Querig’s breath to make everyone in the land forget their past. This is to ensure both peace and that no one would remember that he broke the treaty with the Saxons and slaughtered innocent women and children. The final argument between Sir Gawain and Wistan highlights how dubious such a peace is. When Sir Gawain finishes his account of what Merlin did to Querig and why, Wistan asks, “How can old wounds heal while maggots linger so richly? Or a peace holds for ever built on slaughter and a magician’s trickery?” (327) These questions highlight both the insincerity and fragility of the peace that existed between Saxons and Britons: the Saxons’ forgiveness was achieved through fraudulent means, and once the mist is lifted there is little hope that the peace will last. Sir Gawain also agrees that once the Saxons get their memories back there is danger that war will erupt. But he holds out hope that if Querig is allowed to live for “another season or two” then it “may be long enough for old wounds to heal.” Sir Gawain, then, believes that peace—no matter how it was won—will prevail if it’s allowed to exist for long enough, even if it was achieved dishonestly. Despite his desire to reveal the truth, after Wistan has murdered Sir Gawain and slain Querig, he begins to regret his actions and says that “now the hour’s almost upon us, I find my heart trembles like a maid’s.” Although peace was achieved dishonestly, it still exists, and Wistan’s feelings after

fulfilling his mission highlight the fact that there is no easy answer as to whether honesty that leads to vengeance is better than dishonesty that leads to peace.

Not only peace, but also forgiveness, existed between Britons and Saxons for years before Wistan killed Querig. But that peace was contingent on a collective forgetting that primarily benefited the Britons, who betrayed the treaty made with the Saxons. The inevitability of war once their collective memories are restored shows that the desire for vengeance can be stronger than existing peace, and forgiveness counts for very little in the face of impending war.

The Buried Giant, at its heart, is about love and hatred, on both the personal and national levels. Although the breath of the dragon Querig permeates the land, makes everyone forget the past, and establishes peace, old hatreds—which have roots in the time before they began forgetting—still exist. Axl and Beatrice are an old married couple who love each other intensely but can't remember the history of their marriage. So, they decide to leave their home to find their long-lost son. However, Axl carries with him an unidentifiable sadness and anger at Beatrice, although she professes to love him very much. He is determined to find a solution to the mist that makes them forget so they can remember their lives together. On a broader level, England is at peace after a bloody civil war between the Britons, who were led by the treacherous King Arthur and the Saxons. Although there is peace, hatred bubbles just under the surface; like the sadness and anger Axl carries with him, nobody can identify this hatred because nobody can remember its cause. Ishiguro shows how strong emotions of love and loyalty can obscure underlying conflicts, and questions whether people whose pasts are characterized by hatred can experience genuine love in the present.

Axl and Beatrice have a seemingly happy marriage: Axl often feels a rush of tenderness when he sees Beatrice and refers to her as “princess,” and Beatrice is never happier than when she’s with Axl. As rock-solid as Axl and Beatrice’s marriage appears, however, it is gradually revealed that the couple’s love is largely an illusion. Axl loves watching over Beatrice, but as the story goes on and they get closer to regaining their memories, he begins to feel “a trace of sadness” and soon he feels “both memory and anger growing firmer” when he looks at her, although he hides this from her. This shows that Axl, at least, knows that his feelings for Beatrice are not as strong as he outwardly professes. The moment when Wistan is about to slay Querig and restore everyone’s memories approaches, Beatrice becomes fearful of what Axl will remember about her. She tells Axl,

“Here, Axl, take my hand and help me keep my courage. For I’m thinking I’m the one to fear most the mist’s clearing, not you. I stood beside those stones just now and it came to me there were dark things I did to you once, husband.” (322)

The love between Axl and Beatrice is something illusory like that of the camaraderie between Britons and Saxons. Sir Gawain (a Briton and knight of Arthur) points out to Wistan (a Saxon warrior) that, currently, “old foes” are living “as cousins.” In describing the Saxons as “old foes,” Gawain implies that enmity existed in their lifetimes, which indicates a predisposition for mutual hatred. This idea is further supported by Axl’s observation that “custom and suspicion” divided Saxons and Britons. This means that even though they get along, Saxons and Britons have not fully accepted one another. Furthermore, it is revealed that the peace that exists was forced by King Arthur upon both the Britons and the Saxons. Axl notes that the shadow of King Arthur will fade away along with Querig’s breath, which means peace

will be overturned and the old hatred between Saxons and Britons will be restored, if not intensified.

By the end of the novel the readers can find that hatred and resentment (felt by both Axl and the victimized Saxons) conquer love and the desire for peace (felt by Beatrice and the fearful Britons). Wistan slays Querig knowing that wars will break out once the Saxons remember that they were betrayed and their women and children slaughtered by the Britons during the war. The place where friendship and love once existed will be taken up by hatred. When Axl's memories come back, he tells the narrator (a boatman who will decide if Axl and Beatrice can go on to the island and live out their afterlife together),

“I spoke and acted forgiveness, yet kept locked through long years
some small chamber in my heart that yearned for vengeance. A petty and black
thing I did her, and my son also.” (357)

The above quote shows that not only had Axl resented Beatrice for an earlier infidelity, but had long nurtured that resentment, although he claims to love her now. The boatman notes that “a couple may claim to be bonded by love, but we boatmen may see instead resentment, anger, even hatred. Or a great barrenness. Sometimes a fear of loneliness and nothing more. Abiding love that has endured the years – that we see only rarely.” (49) This description perfectly captures the reality of both Axl and Beatrice's marriage and the relationship between Saxons and Britons: outwardly friendly, even loving, but with a past characterized by mutual anger and betrayal. At the end of the story, the Saxons and Britons are left to fight amongst themselves as their memories are restored, and Axl chooses to send Beatrice with the boatman (presumably to her death) and walk away, even though the boatman tells him to wait. On both levels, the

personal and the national, Ishiguro illustrates the power of old hatred to transcend new love even after years of peace.

Peace reigns in the years following a bloody civil war between the Britons (led by King Arthur) and the Saxons. However, this peace was achieved by means of a mysterious mist created by the breath of Querig (the last dragon, who had been put under a spell on Arthur's orders), which makes all who breathe it forget the past. King Arthur did this to make people forget that he broke a promise not to kill Saxon women and children. This forgetting, is really a form of denial and an attempt to rewrite history by obscuring it, allowing King Arthur to retain his reputation as wise and just. However, there are those who do remember: Sir Gawain, one of Arthur's knights, is devoted to the protection of Querig and, thus, Arthur's reputation. Wistan, a Saxon warrior, also knows about Querig's breath and is sent to slay her, which will end the forgetting and lead to a Saxon uprising. Ishiguro examines the practice of rewriting history by burying the truth and denying reality and proves that, ultimately, the truth will make itself known.

King Arthur betrayed the Saxons by breaking his promise, and he knew this action would destroy his reputation. The use of Querig's cursed breath is meant rewriting Arthur's history and casting him as a wise and judicious ruler. When Sir Gawain first meets Wistan (along with Axl and Beatrice), Sir Gawain introduces himself as a knight of "great Arthur who once ruled these lands with such wisdom and justice." (121) This shows how Sir Gawain wants Arthur to be remembered and reflects most people's beliefs about him. As Wistan regains more and more of his memories, however, he refers to Arthur as "hated Arthur," which represents the opinion that the Saxons will adopt once they remember Arthur's real history. Even as Sir

Gawain sees that the truth will be revealed, he continues to portray Arthur as honorable, angrily saying,

“Will you not understand the acts of a great King, sir? We can only watch and wonder.” (314)

This statement is meant to discredit negative perceptions of Arthur by insinuating that ordinary people are incapable of understanding the justice of his actions.

Furthermore, Sir Gawain is eager to rewrite his own history, knowing that hatred and vitriol will be levelled at him if the truth is known. When Wistan asserts that Arthur had been treacherous, Gawain tries to convince him that they were actually ordered to “spare the innocents caught in the clatter of war.” Not only would this exonerate Arthur, but it would vindicate Gawain, too. Gawain sees that he must admit the role he played in the slaughter, so he tells Beatrice, “I acted as I thought would please God.” This is meant to send the message that, whatever he did, he did it for good reasons and therefore shouldn’t be treated as a villain. Wistan, however, refuses to let Sir Gawain continue to rewrite history, saying, “I see how devoutly you wish it, for your horrors to crumble as dust.” (327) This quote reveals that Wistan understands why Sir Gawain is anxious to stop the truth from revealing itself: Sir Gawain is as guilty as King Arthur.

Unfortunately for Gawain, too little has been done to hide history—the truth, although buried, can still be seen all around them. Gawain believed the slaughter of Saxon children and women would help end the cycle of hatred because there would be no more children, either born or unborn, to grow up and avenge their fathers. Axl, who had made the treaty, insists that the “circle of hate is [...] forged instead in iron by what’s done today,” meaning Axl knew it

would be a lasting hatred that wouldn't go away. In fact, there's evidence of violence all around them. This is shown by a statement Wistan makes while they are at a monastery that used to be a Saxon shelter for women and children and which contained traps to kill Britons: "This is today a place of peace and prayer, yet you needn't gaze so deep to find blood and terror." (161) After Querig is slain, Wistan notes that, "The giant, once well buried, now stirs." (340) He means that now the people will remember the truth, history (which has been quite literally buried on battlefields and in villages) will become the present and the violent deaths of innocent Saxons will be avenged. Ishiguro believes that history, no matter how desperate people try to rewrite it, has a way of making itself felt. Furthermore, he advocates his own belief that even the ugly side of history should be shown honestly, as the narrator apologizes to the reader, "I am sorry to paint such a picture of our country at that time, but there you are." (5)

The characters of a novel speak of a mist that descends upon them and robs them of both their short-term and long-term memories and they discuss what the cause of the mist might be, why it occurs, and how it can be stopped. This mist symbolizes the collective forgetting that results from rewriting history. The mist is actually created by the breath of a dragon, Querig, who had been put under a spell by Merlin on orders from King Arthur after he broke a treaty with the Saxons that forbade his armies to raid Saxon villages and murder women and children.

"It's the dragon Querig, Misstress Beatrice... the cause of the mist you speak of." (176)

"It's Querig's breath which fills this land and robs us of memories" (176)

In essence, King Arthur rewrote history even as it was happening in order to ensure that his future reputation would remain immaculate. Mist obscures one's view of something—it can be thick and impossible to see through, but it doesn't entirely erase what one can't see. In this sense, the mist represents exactly what rewriting history does: it obscures the truth, but it doesn't change it. Because the past was hard to see, both Britons and Saxons stopped looking and forgot all about it. No one questioned when Sir Gawain spoke of the wisdom and judiciousness of King Arthur. However, in the end, the mist rises after Querig is slain and people gradually begin to remember the past. When history exists as firsthand memories in the minds of much of the population, it can no longer be altered or rewritten. So, with the disappearance of the mist, the rewriting of history ends, and the truth being obscuring from view is revealed.

Axl, Beatrice, Sir Gawain and Wistan meet at the top of a mountain near a mysterious monument known as the giant's cairn, which sits near the pit that Merlin was ordered to help trap Querig in. This cairn—which is similar to other mysterious monuments throughout the land—symbolizes the ugly, hidden truth of England's history. It is noted more than once, by Sir Gawain and by Wistan, that one doesn't need to look far to find evidence of past battles and violence. The fields filled with buttercups also hold bones from bloody battles just beneath the surface. The seemingly peaceful monasteries were once witness to unimaginable carnage as Saxon villagers made their last stand against bands of Britons. The “giant” buried beneath the cairn is not a monster in the literal sense, but rather a culmination of the dark truth of this conflict: mutual hatred, betrayal, the slaughter of innocent women and children, and an unquenchable thirst for revenge. These are the things that are set free when, as Wistan says, “The giant, once well buried, now stirs” after the death of Querig restores everyone's

memories. Once the giant (the truth) is unburied, the nation that had enjoyed peace for years will inevitably revert back to war, and violence will ensue as Saxons exact revenge against the Britons for the atrocities they committed under King Arthur.

In the world of the novel, death is a physical journey in which a boatman ferries a person across the water (reminiscent of the River Styx) to mysterious island—supposedly the physical location of the afterlife. Throughout the novel, Axl and Beatrice frequently hear about this island (a place where people spend eternity in peace), which symbolizes the comforting myths that people tell themselves about death. Beatrice and Axl's knowledge of the island comes from rumours they hear about what it is like and how to reach it. At one point, they meet an old woman who is harassing a boatman for taking her husband to the island and leaving her behind. From these two, Beatrice and Axl infer, although the island is highly populated, most people wander it for eternity without encountering another person. In rare instances, apparently, couples who are bonded by love are ferried there together to spend eternity as a pair, but couples whose relationships are more fraught are destined to spend eternity on the island alone. On knowing about the island Beatrice becomes preoccupied with the idea that she and Axl *must* go to the island together, expressing a common human desire not to go alone into death nor leave behind loved ones. As Beatrice's death approaches, she finds purpose and comfort in trying to deepen her marriage to ensure that she won't go to the island alone.

However, Beatrice and Axl's beliefs about the island might not be true—they are based on rumours and hearsay, pieced together from things said by those left behind when their loved ones departed and from the evasive boatmen who ferry people to the island. These are not credible sources, as the boatmen are proven liars (the initial boatman told the old woman he would come back to bring her to her husband, but he didn't), and the grieving people don't

have firsthand knowledge of the island. Because of this, it's never totally clear whether the island is a real place—let alone whether it's actually true that some couples can go there together.

Towards the end of the novel, Beatrice and Axl stand at the shore with a boatman negotiating their passage to the island. At this moment, Beatrice, who is clearly dying, is able to see the island and is eager to go, while Axl (who still enjoys good health) struggles to see the island at all. This discrepancy lends credence to the notion that the island is perhaps not a physical place (or else Axl would be able to see it, too), but rather a myth or metaphor for death and the afterlife, one that seems more urgent and real to Beatrice as death approaches. Furthermore, their conversation with the boatman (who seems to be telling them what they want to hear in order to coax Beatrice to get into the boat alone) suggests that it might not have ever been true that couples can go together to the island. Perhaps all people are destined to die and spend eternity alone, as Beatrice ultimately does. The reader never learns the true nature of the island—whether it is myth or reality. But the significance of the island throughout the novel seems to be its role in the stories that people tell one another about death. Beatrice's belief that it is possible for her to die with her husband lends her comfort. Her quest to recover their memories, repair their relationship gives her purpose, which prevents her from fixating only on her fear.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Axl and Beatrice, the protagonist of the novel *The Buried Giant* (2015) live in a fictional post- Arthurian England in which no-one is able to retain long term memories. After dimly recalling that they might have had a son many years earlier, the couple decide to travel to a neighbouring village to seek him out. The book was nominated for the 2016 World Fantasy Award for best novel, and the 2016 Mythopoeic Award for Adult Literature. It was also placed sixth in the 2016 Locus Award for Best Fantasy Novel. The book has been translated into French, German, Spanish and Italian. Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *The Buried Giant* is set in Britain shortly after the reign of King Arthur and contains two primary plotlines: Axl and Beatrice's search for their son and Wistan's quest to slay the she-dragon, Querig. From the beginning, Ishiguro makes it clear that this is no simple quest narrative by introducing an all-encompassing obstacle: an amnesia-inducing mist that covers the land. The mist transforms

the quest narrative into an exploration of memory and guilt, love and war, as the characters' respective quests are influenced by remembrance. This makes **the power of memory** and the **act of forgetting** into two important **motifs** within the story.

In this novel, *The Buried Giant*, it had been over hundred years since the Romans left England, leaving Britons to defend themselves against the Saxons, the Germanic tribes who were coming from continental Europe to settle in England. In the year 460, after the deaths of several English kings, there was a rash of particularly violent land-grabs carried out by groups of Saxons, which escalated the tension and mutual hatred between the two groups. Although the existence of King Arthur is a hotly-debated topic among English historians, it is widely believed that he ruled and led armies of Britons in the late 5th and early 6th centuries. One battle in particular, the Battle of Badon, occurred around the year 500 and was particularly bloody, but it resulted in a few years of peace between the Britons and the Saxons similar to that which is seen in *The Buried Giant*. Ultimately, war did break out between the Saxons and the Britons again. Despite several periods of peace, violence and tension existed between the two groups until well into the 11th century. The author gives the readers subsequent clues to deduce that the year is 450 A.D. Despite the unnamed narrator's anthropological tone, the readers come to know that they are not in England as it actually was then. But it is the England that was imagined seven centuries later by Geoffrey of Monmouth and other mythologizers who gave us King Arthur, Sir Gawain and the wizard Merlin.

The revelation of long-buried secrets is a favorite theme of Kazuo Ishiguro's and he explores it in some of his other works, including *Never Let Me Go* and *The Remains of the Day*. Sir Thomas Malory's classic collection and retelling of the legend of King Arthur, *Le Morte de' Arthur*, tells the story of King Arthur's time on the English throne and the stories of

his loyal Knights of the Round Table, which includes Sir Gawain, who features prominently in *The Buried Giant*. Richard Yates's novel *Revolutionary Road* features a seemingly happy couple with serious marital problems lurking beneath the surface, similar to Axl and Beatrice's marriage in *The Buried Giant*. Additionally, *Possession* by A. S. Byatt involves a quest to discover the hidden secrets and truth about English history, particularly for two 19th century poets whose turbulent affair ran contrary to stereotypical beliefs about sexuality in Victorian England.

According to Washington Post, "*The Buried Giant* has the clear ring of legend, as graceful, original and humane as anything Ishiguro has written...". *The Buried Giant* begins as a couple, Axl and Beatrice, set off across a troubled land of mist and rain in the hope of finding a son they have not seen for years. They expect to face many hazards- some strange and other-worldly- but they cannot yet foresee how their journey will reveal to them dark and forgotten corners of their love for one another. Axl and Beatrice, in spite of being confident in the strength of their love to withstand regaining all of their memories, worry about what restoring memories will mean for the positive relationship between the Saxons and the Britons.

Speaking of England's landscape, Sir Gawain tells Axl that it is a fine green valley but it is not far beneath the daisies and buttercups the remains of old slaughter lie. Similarly, one need not dig far into the pasts of the Saxons and Britons to find treachery, hatred, and violence, even though they now live in peace. However, that peace was only achieved by forcing forgetfulness on the people. When Sir Gawain pleads with Wistan to leave the country to rest in forgetfulness, he also means that Wistan should not bring back memories because forgetfulness is the only way to ensure continued peace. Wistan, however, scorns the Britons for achieving peace only by forcing forgetfulness and allowing wrongdoers to go unpunished

after the huge massacre of women and innocent children. For Wistan, memory is the surest road to winning justice for the slaughtered.

Ishiguro, in this novel *The Buried Giant*, writes about a time that remains a mystery to historians – a matter of archaeology and legend. In an interview with Alex Clark in the *Guardian*, Ishiguro makes explicit that he is interested in the moment before the Saxons fought and conquered the Britons, and interested in speculating about how that war might have emerged from Arthur's previous conquest. The absence of recorded history opens a space for speculation, even fantasy. In, *The Buried Giant*, the Saxons – Wistan and Edwin – represent the future, while their Briton travelling companions – Axl, Beatrice and Gawain – have only that dimly-remembered Arthurian past. The release of the Buried Giant carries with it, resentments, knowledge of past atrocities and hatred, which we know will be directed at the Briton oppressors.

Sir Gawain's monologues laid bare a man who was deeply disturbed by his past and by his own actions. Even though he boasted of the honour of his position as a knight of Arthur, he couldn't boast of his actions. Since his actions were disgraceful, he was defensive. Gawain's knowledge of this disgrace and shame was evident in the fact that he protected the she-dragon as its breath erased the memory of their horrible actions in the past. This in itself was a further act of cowardice as Arthur and his men refused to face the consequences of their deeds. Instead, they chose to hide what they had done not only from the Saxons, but also from their fellow Britons. This dishonour, the savage massacres of Saxon innocents, and Sir Gawain's guilt and shame all illustrated the contemporary faults of the code of chivalry. The realities of war were such that maintaining such a code was impossible. Yet the knights who failed to do so could

not face their disgrace and chose to falsely retain the status and air of a noble knight, in spite of their dishonorable actions. In toto, the code of chivalry, Ishiguro claimed, was not a code of honour, but rather a code of hypocrisy and deceit.

In this novel *The Buried Giant*, Kazuo Ishiguro added to and contradicted the literary tradition of Arthurian legend. Through his historical novel, Ishiguro offered a critique not only on Arthurian literature's idealization of the knightly code of honour, but also on knighthood itself, that unattainable epitome of honour in war. By highlighting the impossible standards of the knighthood code of chivalry in the face of the savage realities of war, Ishiguro critiqued knighthood as being richly romanticized and glorified in other Arthurian texts. Ishiguro's representation of Sir Gawain as a hypocritical knight contrasted with Wistan, the humble warrior who maintained honour but understood and acknowledged the limits of chivalry in wartime.

The Buried Giant, at its heart, is about love and hatred, on both the personal and national levels. Although the breath of the dragon Querig permeates the land, makes everyone forget the past, and establishes peace, old hatreds—which have roots in the time before they began forgetting—still exist. Axl and Beatrice are an old married couple who love each other intensely but can't remember the history of their marriage. So, they decide to leave their home to find their long-lost son. However, Axl carries with him an unidentifiable sadness and anger at Beatrice even though she professes to love him very much. He is determined to find a solution to the mist that makes them forget so they can remember their lives together. On a broader level, England is at peace after a bloody civil war between the Britons, who were led by the treacherous King Arthur and the Saxons. Although there is peace, hatred bubbles just

under the surface; like the sadness and anger Axl carries with him, nobody can identify this hatred because nobody can remember its cause. Ishiguro shows how strong emotions of love and loyalty can obscure underlying conflicts, and questions whether people whose pasts are characterized by hatred can experience genuine love in the present.

By the end of the novel the readers learn that hatred and resentment (felt by both Axl and the victimized Saxons) conquer love and the desire for peace (felt by Beatrice and the fearful Britons). Wistan slays Querig knowing that wars will break out once the Saxons remember that they were betrayed and their women and children slaughtered by the Britons during the war. The place where friendship and love once existed will be taken up by hatred. When Axl's memories come back, he tells the narrator (a boatman who will decide if Axl and Beatrice can go on to the island and live out their afterlife together),

“I spoke and acted forgiveness, yet kept locked through long years some small chamber in my heart that yearned for vengeance. A petty and black thing I did her, and my son also.” (357)

Axl had not only resented Beatrice for an earlier infidelity, but had long nurtured that resentment, although he claims to love her now. The boatman notes that

“a couple may claim to be bonded by love, but we boatmen may see instead resentment, anger, even hatred. Or a great barrenness. Sometimes a fear of loneliness and nothing more. Abiding love that has endured the years – that we see only rarely.” (49)

The description perfectly captures the reality of both Axl and Beatrice's marriage and the relationship between Saxons and Britons: outwardly friendly, even loving, but with a past

characterized by mutual anger and betrayal. At the end of the story, the Saxons and Britons are left to fight amongst themselves as their memories are restored. Axl chooses to send Beatrice with the boatman (presumably to her death) and walk away, even though the boatman tells him to wait. On both levels, the personal and the national, Ishiguro illustrates the power of old hatred to transcend new love even after years of peace. To conclude, *The Buried Giant* is a heartwarming and heartbreaking love story in equal measures. Ishiguro opines that betrayals in a stoical marriage can be as devastating as the human impulse to war.

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The Dichotomy of Love and Disdain in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*

A project submitted to

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Thoothukudi

affiliated to

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in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the award of the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

By KIRUBAVATHY RANZOM. G

(REG. NO. 19APEN14)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

**ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous) (Re-
accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)**

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2021

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	African American Dichotomy	14
Three	World Of Segregation And Social Injustices	28
Four	Black Feminism	44
Five	Summation	57
	Works Cited	67

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **The Dichotomy of Love and Disdain in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*** a novel submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Kirubavathy Ranzom G. during the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Guide

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Examiner

PRINCIPAL

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **The Dichotomy of Love and Disdain in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

April 2021

Thoothukudi

Kirubavathy Ranzom G.

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PREFACE

Kathryn Stockett is an American writer, born in 1969 at Jackson, Mississippi, United states. Stockett's debut novel *The Help* discusses the problems of democracy equality and racial discrimination. The novel focuses on how white housewives justifies the exploitation and emotional abuse of their black maids by convincing themselves that black people are fundamentally different and inferior to white people

The project entitled **The Dichotomy of Love and Disdain in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*** is an exploration of the ways in which racism pervaded every aspect of social life in 1960s Jackson, Mississippi from Jim Crow Laws that sanctioned discrimination and segregation as official policy to casual conversations between middle class white women and black maids.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the historical background of the African American race and showcases the biography of Kathryn Stockett and her debut work *The Help*.

The second chapter **African American Dichotomy** deals with racial discrimination which affects all black characters, especially Aibileen and Minny who lived in the deeply prejudiced society of Mississippi during the Jim Crow era.

The third chapter **World of Segregation and Social Injustices** focuses on the events connected with the daily lives of Mississippians and demonstrates how strong is the bias of the whites towards the black residents of Jackson by means of numerous examples of racist behaviour.

The fourth chapter **Black Feminism** concentrates on the stereotyped images of the black women - mammy, black matriarch, welfare mother, black lady - presented so effectively from the very beginning as lower and inferior group of people.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook 8th Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Kathryn Stockett was an American writer and novelist. She was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi. After graduating from the University of Alabama with a degree in English and creative writing, Stockett moved to New York City where she worked in magazine publishing for nine years and turned the complicated experiences with Demetrie into her first novel, *The Help*. The Book got rejected by over fifty publishers, but once published, it sold over ten million copies and lost more than a hundred weeks on the *The New York Times Best Seller* list. She currently lives in Atlanta, Georgia with her husband and daughter. She is working on her second novel.

The novel *The Help* was released in 2009 and became a bestseller. In 2011 the book also became a successful and popular movie. Both the book and the movie, bring up the race issue in Southern US. We also discover a direct parallel between the story of Miss Skeeter's disappeared maid Constantine and the maid that previously worked in Stockett's family, Demetrie.

Kathryn Stockett's novel *The Help* can be called African-American literature, despite the author being a white American. Treating the subject of oppressed black maids in the United States during the 1960s, Stockett touches upon race, class and gender issues. Looking at Kathryn Stockett's background, it becomes clear that she has some experience with the African-American community. As a young girl living in Jackson, Mississippi, Kathryn Stockett loved spending time with her family's maid Demetrie, an African-American woman who worked for her family since 1955. Demetrie would play games with Stockett, tell her stories, and shower her with affection. But the young Stockett also witnessed the

discrimination that Demetrie faced working for a white family. Stockett's family forced Demetrie to use a separate bathroom and to sit by herself while eating.

Inspiration *The Help* was written out of love, respect and gratitude for Demetrie, are we to believe what Stockett writes in the afterword. She has included a passionate afterword called "Too little, too late" at the end of *The Help*. In this section, she makes it clear that her field of interest is the same as that of Alice Walker, worrying about Demetrie who must have felt what it was like to be "poor, colored and female"(200).

In an afterword to the novel she states that "I was scared, a lot of the time, that I was crossing a terrible line, writing in the voice of a black person. I was afraid I would fail to describe a relationship that was so intensely influential in my life, so loving, so grossly stereotyped in American history and literature" (450).

The reason why Kathryn Stockett wrote *The Help* is described in her essay '*Too little, too late*'. Stockett describes her own relationship with a black maid, Demetrie, who at 28 came to work for Stockett's family and helped to raise her. Stockett also describes her conflict about trying to write the stories of black women. She explained that *The Help*'s plot is related to her childhood, her view on racial relationships in her country, and her ethical intentions (447-451). Stockett explained that she felt ashamed with her 'bad attitude and view' about her black Nanny, Demetrie, and she wanted to make it up now. She called her feeling as 'white mistake' that she represented as a character of Skeeter, the main white character, in *The Help*. Her view became complicated given the historical context of racial segregation and the Afro-American Civil Rights movement (Vieytes, 2016). Before writing her novel, Stockett traced back the historical context of black servants through conducting interviews with both black housemaids and the children they raised in 1860s. However, during her observations, she found the fear of Black

women to reveal their condition when they became white ladies' servant, like the story of Skeeter in this novel. The resulting book caused a lot of commotion not only in Jackson. Although the main characters do not participate in the actual civil rights movement, some of them tried to make changes in their own lives.

The long history of African-American literature deals with difficulty and violence. African American literature explores the varied issues of Black people in United States, along with themes such as African American culture, racism, religion, slavery and sense of home. African American literature constitutes a vital branch in the literature of the African Diaspora and African American literature has influenced in the great African diasporic heritage and in turns influenced African American literature both exists within the larger realm of post-colonial literature, even though scholars draw a distinctive line between the two by stating that African American literature differs from most post colonial literature in that it is written by member of a minority community who reside within a nation of vast wealth and economic power.

The Harlem Renaissance was the name given to the cultural, social, and artistic explosion that took place in Harlem between the end of World War I and the middle of 1930s. During the time it was known as the "New Negro Movement" named after the 1925 anthology by Alain Locke. Amid this period Harlem was the Mecca where black writers, artist, musicians, photographers, poets and scholars travelled in order to find a place where they could freely express their talents. One of the factors contributing to the rise of the Harlem Renaissance was the Great Migration of African-Americans to northern cities between 1919 and 1926. The two major causes that fueled the Great Migration were the Jim Crow Segregation laws of the south and the start of World War I. When World War I began in

Europe, foreign workers were no longer able to emigrate to America and the factories in the north needed a new labor source and they looked to the south for this work force. Hundreds of thousands of blacks migrated during this period, but it is estimated that five million blacks migrated from the south between 1900-1960.

The Harlem Renaissance was a literary, artistic and intellectual movement that kindled a new black cultural identity. Its essence was summed up by Alain Locke when he declared that through art, “Negro life is seizing its first chances for group expression and self-determination”. Harlem became the center of a “spiritual coming of age” in which Locke’s “New Negro” transformed social disillusionment into racial pride. The Harlem Renaissance was successful in many ways. It brought the Black experience clearly within the “Corpus” of American cultural history and encouraged a new appreciation of folk roots and culture. On sociological level it redefined how America and the world viewed African-Americans from rural undereducated peasants to one of urban sophistication. The Renaissance influenced future generations of black artists, writers, and musicians through sharing their rich cultural experiences.

With the end of the Civil War in 1865, hundreds of thousands of African Americans newly freed from the yoke of slavery in the South began to dream of fuller participation in American society, including political empowerment, equal economic opportunity, and economic and cultural self-determination. Unfortunately in the 1870s, the dream of fuller participation in the American Society was largely dead, as white supremacy was quickly restored to the Reconstruction of South. White lawmakers on state and local levels passed strict racial segregation laws known as “Jim Crow Laws” (1965) that made African Americans second-class citizens. Under Jim Crow laws states could authorize separate

facilities not only for schools but for hospitals and clinics, sports events, restaurants, barbershops, railroad and bus stations, restrooms, beaches, public parks, and many other places. While a small number of African Americans were able to become landowners, most were exploited as sharecroppers, a system designed to keep them poor and powerless. The Ku Klux Klan hate groups used violence and terror to keep blacks from asserting their rights as citizens in many states.

With booming economies across the North and Midwest offering industrial jobs for workers of every race, many African Americans realized their hopes for a better standard of living and a more racially tolerant environment lay outside the South. During 20th century, the Great Migration was underway as hundreds of thousands of African Americans relocated to cities like Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, Philadelphia, and New York. The Harlem section of Manhattan, which covers just three square miles, drew nearly 175,000 African Americans, giving the neighborhood the largest concentration of black people in the world. Harlem became a destination for African Americans of all backgrounds. From unskilled laborers to an educated middle-class, they shared common experiences of slavery, emancipation, and racial oppression, as well as a determination to forge a new identity as free people.

Among the Renaissance's most significant contributors were intellectuals W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Cyril Briggs, and Walter Francis White electrifying performers Josephine Baker and Paul Robeson; writers and poets Zora Neale Hurston, Effie Lee Newsome, Countee Cullen; visual artists Aaron Douglas and Augusta Savage; and an extraordinary list of legendary musicians, including Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Eubie Blake, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Ivie Anderson, Josephine Baker, Fats Waller, Jelly Roll Morton, and countless others.

Most importantly, the quest for recognition instilled in African Americans across the country a new spirit of self-determination and pride, a new social consciousness, and a new commitment to political activism, all of which would provide a foundation for the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. African American literature reached the mainstreams as books by Black writers continually achieved best selling award-winning status. This was also the time when the works of African American writers began to be accepted by academia as a legitimate genre of American literature. A number of scholars and writers are generally credited with the helping to promote and define African American literature as a genre during this time.

The first Afro-American book published in late eighteenth century produces conditions of slavery in a certain genre of writing, which describes the slave's narratives. By the time civil war began, Americans were introduced to another significant slave narrative, *Incidents in the life of a slave girl* (1861). The author, Harriet Jacobs had to publish under a pseudonym in order to write about the gender based violence she experienced as a slave. The text was published in *New York newspaper*. Just before World War-II broke out, Richard Wright, who was born in Mississippi but moved north to Chicago in adulthood, published *Native Son* (1940). The novel *The Help* also addresses the consequences of racial prejudice and segregation, discussing the legal rights to individuals.

Some of the contemporary writers like Alice Dunbar Nelson's career as a poet, journalist, and activists began well before her marriage to Paul Laurence Dunbar. In her writing Dunbar-Nelson explored themes central to African-American womanhood, her multiracial identity as well as African-American life throughout the United States under Jim Crow Law. Literary historian George Kent argues that poet Gwendolyn Brooks holds a

unique position in American letters. Not only has she combined a strong commitment to racial identity and equality with a mastery of poetic techniques, but she has also managed to bridge the gap between the academic poets of her generation in the 1940's and the young black militant writers of the 1960's.

The Civil rights Movement began in the 1950s, African Americans led a fight for basic equality, using a number of different protest strategies. Martin Luther King, Jr. preferred a policy of peaceful resistance modeled after Indian social reformer, Mahatma Gandhi. Malcolm X advocated rapid social change "by any means necessary". By the same token not all civil rights activists had the same goals some sought the passage of an amendment guaranteeing equal status before the law and full assimilation into civil culture whereas others wanted to topple the existing white power structure. In 1963, John F. Kennedy proposed a new civil rights bill to congress, one that offered federal protection for African Americans who wanted to vote, shop, eat out, and be educated on equal terms with whites. In order to show their support for the bill and to pressure Congress to pass it, civil rights groups organized a march. On August 28, 1963, the day of the march estimated 200,000 to 500,000 supporters showed up, making it the largest political demonstration to that date. The march is remembered mostly for the famous "I Have A Dream" speech delivered by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. By the end of the decade, many of the 'civil rights activists' goals had been met, although many of these victories had come at a high cost of human life.

In 1960s, the time when *The Help* takes place, was not only a complicated, but also a revolutionary period of time for black people in the South. The Jim Crow era had just officially ended a few years before and the Civil Rights movement was gaining popularity. Nevertheless, African Americans still suffered racist treatment and discrimination because, as

Kathleen M. Muldoon states, "Slavery may have ended decades before. But African Americans in the South were not free" (Muldoon 22).

Black women in particular were affected by these restrictions at their work in White homes. There, the white employers treated the black maids as inferior and continued sticking to the rules of racial segregation. "Ever morning, until you dead in the ground, you gone have to make this decision . . . You gone have to ask yourself, *Am I gone believe what them fools say about me today?*" (63). Grace E. Hale argues that "In their creation of the white home as a central symbolic site in the New South, women of a rising white southern middle class were key creators of the new racial order, segregation as culture" (93). Although the Jim Crow laws were abolished, white middle-class Southerners emphasized their superiority over their black employees, especially plantation workers or domestic servants (Hale 87). Before, the Jim Crow laws denied black people access to the same places as white people although politicians assured them that they would be treated equally under the Fourteenth Amendment. However, this was not the case and even after the abolishment, African Americans suffered racial discrimination (Muldoon 15). This separation of society is taken up by Kathryn Stockett and, as Christopher Lloyd explains, "*The Help* is problematic indeed, but it nonetheless agitates questions of race and corporeality in the Jim Crow South" (272). Therefore, when reading *The Help*, it is important to consider historical contexts such as racial segregation in the Jim Crow era, the separation of both races through the Jim Crow laws, and the hardship domestic servants had to endure at the white home. Harlem Renaissance had already paved the way for the succeeding generation by introducing new areas of thought, expression and subject matter. Civil rights groups continued to fight for racial equality supporting affirmative action programs to help minorities gain gender access to education, jobs and profession.

Brooks is best remembered for his poems such as “*We Real Cool*” and “*The Ballad of Rudolph Reed*”. Through her poetry, Brooks revealed a political consciousness and love of African-American culture. Influenced heavily by the Jim Crow Era and the civil rights movement, Brooks penned more than a dozens of poetry and prose as well as one novel. The spiritual, work songs, folk-tales, and sermon emerged on the southern slave plantation in the nineteenth century and gave way to gospel music, the blues, jazz and rap in the twentieth century. These expressive forms were not originally produced from mass circulation. They were in group forms of expressing the realities of their daily lives in America. These forms often included coded or secret messages of enduring the ills of slavery. The African American vernacular tradition informs African American literature of slavery and freedom.

Major themes during this period are resistance to tyranny and dedication to human dignity. African American authors during this period questioned the institution of slavery as they become increasingly familiar with the teachings of Holy Bible. These writers equated literacy with freedom. With their growing literacy, African American authors appealed to the traditional Christian doctrine of Universal brotherhood of humanity as a way of challenging the morality of slavery. In 1987, writer Tony Morrison told *New York Times* reporter Mervyn Rothstein, the importance of being an African American woman and writer. She said that it is hard to define black writer. Because her writings does not give her the fulfillment as a writer due to the disparity of gender differences. Like Morrison, other African-American women who happen to be scribes, have had to define themselves through their artistry. Philip Wheatly, was the first African American to publish a book and the first to win international acclaim as a writer. Wheatly was born in Africa and sold into slavery in America and yet able to write poems in her adopted English Language. The two other white authors who have

written novels on African-Americans long before Stockett's time, namely Harriet Becher Stowe and Harper Lee, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Becher Stowe (1852) and *To kill a mockingbird* (1960) by Harper Lee are two classics written by white female authors. Like *The Help*, the two afore mentioned novels are both dearly loved and widely criticized. They are obligatory reading at most American High Schools, as well as subjects of study at many faculties of literature. Still, both are criticized for being sentimental novels in which the authors show little understanding of their black characters. Literary critic Richard Yarborough writes that "Although Stowe [author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*] unquestionably sympathized with the slaves, her commitment to challenging the claim of black inferiority was frequently undermined by her own endorsement of racial stereotypes" (Yarborough 47).

Some other women writers such as Frances Watkins Harper, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Zora Neale Hurston and Gwendolyn Brooks all have used their creativity to express the importance of black woman hood in literature.

Kathryn Stockett's debut novel *The Help* is the result of racial discrimination, democracy and equality. This novel is the debut novel to Kathryn Stockett, who was born in 1969 at Jackson, Mississippi, United States, an American writer. After graduating from the University of Alabama with a degree in English and creative writing, she moved to New York City. There she lived for sixteen years and worked in magazine publishing and marketing. *The Help* is a historical fiction novel by American author. Kathryn Stockett and published by Penguin Books in 2009. The story is about African Americans working in white households in Jackson, Mississippi during the early 1960s. A USA Today article called it one of the "summer sleeper hits." An early review in The New York Times notes Stockett's "affection and intimacy buried beneath even the most seemingly impersonal household

connections," and says the book is a "button-pushing, soon to be wildly popular novel." The Atlanta Journal-Constitution said of the book: "This heartbreaking story is a stunning debut from a gifted talent."

Ms. Stockett, said the idea for the novel came to her in the immediate aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks, when she was living in New York. Ms. Stockett, who had another novel in her drawer that a writing coach had told her was "just awful," said she felt homesick and "tried to comfort myself by writing in the voices of the people I missed." It took her five years to complete and was rejected by 60 literary agents, over a period of three years, before agent Susan Ramer agreed to represent Stockett. *The Help* has since been published in 35 countries and three languages. As of August 2011, it had sold seven million copies in print and audio book editions, and spent more than 100 weeks on *The New York Times Best Seller list*. *The Help's audiobook* version is narrated by Jenna Lamia, Bahni Turpin, Octavia Spencer, and Cassandra Campbell. Spencer was Stockett's original inspiration for the character of Minny, and also plays her in the *film adaptation*. *The Help* won the awards and honors like Orange Prize Longlist (2010), Indies Choice Book Award (Adult Debut, 2010), Townsend Prize for Fiction (2010), Exclusive Books Boeke Prize (2009), SIBA Book Award (Fiction, 2010), International Dublin Literary Award Longlist (2011), *Christian Science Monitor* Best Book (Fiction, 2009, Goodreads Choice Awards (Best Fiction, 2009).

Reflective of her first novel, Stockett was very close to an African-American domestic worker. A lawsuit was filed in Mississippi court by Ablene Cooper, a maid who used to work for Stockett's brother. It claimed that Stockett used her likeness in the book. A Hinds County, Mississippi judge threw the case out of court, citing the statute of limitations Stockett denies her claim for stealing her likeness and says she only met her life briefly.

Before publishing her first novel, she wrote on the fateful horror on the September 11th attack. *The Help* took her five years to complete, and the book was rejected by forty five rejection letters from agents sixty literary agents before agent Susan Ramer agreed to represent Stockett. This novel is about African-American maids working in white households in Jackson, *The Help* has since been published in forty two languages. As of August 2012, it had sold ten million copies and still selling briskly. *The Help* spent more than hundred weeks on *The New York Times* Best seller list. *The Help* climbed best seller charts a few months after it was released. The British cover to Kathryn Stockett novel *The Help* about the experience of black maids in Mississippi in the early 1960's- is a period, photograph of a little white girl in a pushchair flanked by two black women in scratched white uniform *The Help* of the book's title. The photographs which was found in the National Congress archives was deemed into controversial to be used on the American cover. The spectra of racism in the South are still raw and political correctness works overtime.

The Help by Kathryn Stockett shows racial segregation and inequality toward Afro-American community. *The Help* is narrated by three women, Minny a black maid who was difficult to get job because of her tempered personality, Aibileen, a black servant who worked in Miss Leefolt's family to raise Mae Mobley, and Miss Skeeter, a white woman who wanted to be a writer. She had been raised by a black servant since she was young, and she was still wonder why her beloved maid, Constantine, was disappeared (The Guardian, 2013). Help is a black community who spent their lives raising white family. On the other hand, their own children were taken care by others. The helps spent their days feeding, dressing, and playing with the children they raised. They watched the children grow and change like white

community in general, who unfortunately, discriminate against the black maids, those who had raised them.

Chapter Two

African American Dichotomy

The Help as a historical fiction by the American writer Kathryn Stockett is about the African Americans working in white households in Jackson, Mississippi during the early 1960s. Despite the author being a white American, Kathryn Stockett focuses on the issues of racism in the Southern United States by portraying the relationships between the White and Black Americans from the late summer of 1962 to 1964 in Jackson, Mississippi in her novel. She brings out the hidden facts of the black maids who work for white employers. Stockett was very bold enough to voice out the difficulties of the black maids. The purpose of writing this novel is to bring out the facts to light, where two different norms were practiced in the America. The novel has the classic elements of a crowd pleaser and it features a number of feisty women enmeshed in a page-turning plot, clear villains and a bit of a history lesson.

Stockett demonstrates racial discrimination which affects all black characters that lived in the deeply prejudiced society of Mississippi during the Jim Crow era. She presents the unbearable living conditions experienced by the black inhabitants of Jackson and the cruel treatment met out by the Blacks who take part in protests fighting for equal rights, and humiliating black workers by white Americans. She puts the main emphasis on portraying the suffering of black maids who work for white families looking after their children, cooking and serving food, and cleaning their houses. As Yanick St. Jean states in his book, “for an African American it takes great strength and courage to ‘do tough’ in the face of discrimination and misrepresentations, misconceptions, and distortions of black women at the hands of white Americans” (Yanick 1998: IX).

With its intimate portrayals of the maids' relationships with their employers and the children they care for, *The Help* appeals to readers who feel they are getting a behind-the-scenes peek into a dark period in the country's history. In pitch-perfect voices, Kathryn Stockett creates three extraordinary women whose determination to start a movement of their own forever changes a town, and the way women, mothers, daughters, caregivers, friends, view one another. A deeply moving novel filled with poignancy, humor, and hope, *The Help* is a timeless and universal story about the lines we abide by, and the ones we don't.

The Help garnered instant attention due to its unusual and rarely addressed subject matter: the relationship in the South between white families and the domestic servants, who were primarily black, whom they employed in their homes during the 1960s. Having grown up during this period in Mississippi, Stockett was familiar with the dynamic but controversial subject. In an interview with a writer for Book reporter Web site, Stockett explained her attitude as a child:

Growing up in Mississippi, almost every family I knew had a black woman working in their house—cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the white children. That was life in Mississippi. I was young and assumed that's how most of America lived.

Only after she moved North did Stockett realize that she had grown up in a microcosm, and that her memories of her childhood were not of a universal experience. She found herself reminiscing with other Southerners she met in New York, trading stories about growing up with black domestic help. Gradually, those memories began to spark an idea and she decided to write a story about her relationship with her family's maid when she was a child. Early on in the writing process, Stockett chose to frame her narrative from the point of view of a black maid. It

seemed logical, and she had no doubts about her choice because at the time she did not believe anyone else would ever read the story.

The novel set in the segregated South of the 1960s, provides a detailed description of the events connected with daily lives of Mississippians. Kathryn Stockett demonstrates how strong is the bias of the Whites toward black residents of Jackson by means of numerous examples of racist behaviour. Apart from fictional events, the novel also demonstrates events which actually took place, thus adding authenticity to the work. The main characters are the white journalist Miss Skeeter and the two black maids Aibileen and Minny. These women decided to risk it all and tell their stories in an effort to show what was really like for them. *The Help* illustrates how these women fought racism and prejudice by becoming unified with one another. Three ordinary women are about to take one extraordinary step.

Set in the early 1960s in Jackson, Mississippi, the novel is told primarily from the first-person perspectives of three women: Aibileen Clark, Minny Jackson, and Eugenia "Skeeter" Phelan. Aibileen is a maid who takes care of children and cleans. Her own 24-year-old son, Treelore, died from an accident on his job. In the story, she is tending the Leefolt household and caring for their toddler, Mae Mobley. Minny is Aibileen's friend who frequently tells her employers what she thinks of them, resulting in her having been fired from nineteen jobs. Minny's most recent employer was Mrs. Walters, mother of Hilly Holbrook.

Skeeter is the daughter of a wealthy white family who owns Longleaf, a cotton farm and formerly a plantation, outside Jackson. Many of the field hands and household helps are African Americans. Skeeter has just returned home after graduating from the University of Mississippi and wants to become a writer. Skeeter's mother wants her to get married and thinks

her degree is just a pretty piece of paper. Skeeter is curious about the disappearance of Constantine, her maid who brought her up and cared for her. Constantine had written to Skeeter while she was away from home in college saying what a great surprise she had awaiting her when she came home. Skeeter's mother tells her that Constantine quit and went to live with her relatives in Chicago. Skeeter does not believe that Constantine would leave her like this; she knows something is wrong and believes that information will eventually come out. Everyone Skeeter asks about the unexpected disappearance of Constantine pretends it never happened and avoids giving her any real answers.

The life Constantine led while being the help to the Phelan family leads Skeeter to the realization that her friends' maids are treated very differently from the way the white employees are treated. She decides, with the assistance of a publisher, that she wants to reveal the truth about being a colored maid in Mississippi. Skeeter struggles to communicate with the maids and gain their trust.

Eventually, Skeeter wins Aibileen's trust through a friendship which develops while Aibileen helps Skeeter write a household tips column for the local newspaper. Skeeter accepted the job to write the column as a stepping stone to becoming a writer /editor, as was suggested by Elaine Stein, editor at Harper & Row, even though she knows nothing about cleaning or taking care of a household, since that is the exclusive domain of 'the help.' The irony of this is not lost on Skeeter, and she eventually offers to pay Aibileen for the time and expertise she received from her.

Elaine Stein had also suggested to Skeeter that she find a subject to write about which she can be dedicated to and passionate about. Skeeter realizes that she wants to expose to the world

in the form of a book the deplorable conditions the maids in the South endure in order to barely survive. Unfortunately, such an exposé is a dangerous proposition, not just for Skeeter, but for any maids who agree to help her. Aibileen finally agrees to tell her story. Minny, despite her distrust of whites, eventually agrees as well, and she and Aibileen are unable to convince others to tell their stories. Skeeter researches several laws governing what blacks still can and cannot do in Mississippi, and her growing opposition to the racial order results in her being shunned by her social circle. Yule May, Hilly's maid, is arrested for stealing one of Hilly's rings to pay her twin sons' college tuition after Hilly refused to lend the money. The other maids decide that they are willing to take a chance with their jobs, and their safety, and join the book project.

The thrust of the book is the collaborative project between the white Skeeter and the struggling, exploited "colored" help, who together are writing a book of true stories about their experiences as the 'help' to the white women of Jackson. Not all the stories are negative, and some describe beautiful and generous, loving and kind events; while others are cruel and even brutal.

Of the three narrators two are black housekeepers, Aibileen and Minny, who work for white families in Jackson; the third is Skeeter, a young white woman who aspires to be a writer and break free of the Junior League expectations of her childhood friends (one of whom employs Aibileen) and her starchy mother. It is narrated as if Miss Skeeter wants to write a book about the relationship between the black maids and their employers from the point of view of the help, something no one has ever done before. For her assistance Aibileen and Minny tell her their stories. Throughout the novel we get to know the women, both in their own words and from the point of view of the others, since each chapter is narrated by one of the three.

Miss Skeeter is in many ways described as an innocent and well-meaning person. In the beginning of the book she says, “by sixteen I wasn’t just not pretty, I was painfully tall. The kind of tall that puts a girl in the back row of class pictures with the boys. The kind of tall where your mother spends her nights taking down hems, yanking sweater sleeves, flattening your hair for dances you hadn’t been asked to” (57). By picturing herself as not pretty and tall could give the reader a harmless view of her, although it could also indicate her as weak, and in need of saving, as Jones says many readers interpreted her to be (18-19). In addition, her behaviour towards her friends exaggerates the feeling of her as weak. For instance, when Miss Skeeter and her friends Hilly and Elizabeth are talking and Aibileen comes to serve them salad, she starts to notice things she had not done before. “Hilly raises her voice about three octaves higher when she talks to colored people. Elizabeth smiles like she’s talking to a child“ (157). However, as Jones mentions she never confronts her friends about their bad behaviour and does not stand up for the coloured people, (18-19). Consequently, she is well aware that her friends are othering Aibileen and by not confronting them she lets them continue with their “belief in the natural superiority of white people” (Weedon 15).

Furthermore, Miss Skeeter is described as naive. When she asks Aibileen if she wants to help her write the book, Aibileen answers “‘Miss Skeeter’, and I say it slow, try to make it count, I do this with you, I might as well burn my own house down” (103). Miss Skeeter does not seem to realise how dangerous it can be for coloured people telling their perspective in the relationship between white and black people. Instead, she thinks about the irony of the relationship between the maids and their employers:

I’d like to write about this showing the point of view of the help. The colored women down here’ ... ‘They raise a white child and then twenty years later the

child becomes the employer. It's that irony, that we love them and they love us, yet...'. I swallowed, my voice trembling. 'We don't even allow them to use the toilet in the house'. (106-107)

In addition, Miss Skeeter simplifies the relationship, which results in neglect not only of the reality of racist violence but also of the individuality of the black women. Thus, she amplifies the mechanism of othering. Another example that shows this is when Miss Skeeter tells the reader about her childhood. "Sometimes two girls from next door would come over to play with me, named Mary Nell and Mary Roan. They were so black I couldn't tell them apart and called them both just Mary" (62). This indicates that Miss Skeeter has fallen into the trap of treating black people as icons and not as individuals, something Foster-Singleton says that Stockett's text does in places (106).

It is a racist utterance where Miss Skeeter, the one who is supposed to fight for the coloured people, shows her patronising attitude towards people who are not the same as she is. At the end of the novel Miss Skeeter thinks for herself "wasn't that the point of the book? For women to realize, we are just two people. Not that much separates us. Not nearly as much as I'd thought" (418). By saying this she confirms that she still has prejudices towards black people. All people are different, but not because of their colour or race.

Clearly, it is an improvement to realize that "not that much separates us", but the borders do still exist. Black people are still narrated as different and remain as the other. As Ashcroft et al argue, the other is different from the self, but the self needs to identify with the other in order to have control over it (103). At the end of the novel the conditions for black people are in some cases even worse than when she started to write the book, while she gets the opportunity of a

lifetime. Of course she is the good-hearted white woman “awakened and transformed by black stories arguing for their common humanity” (45) as Donaldson says many readers interpreted her to be. However, this is where her heroic efforts end.

The next character Minny is pictured in many situations as the other. The beginning of Minny’s first chapter indicates this. She is waiting outside Celia’s house, hoping to get a job. “Standing on that white lady’s back porch, I tell myself, Tuck it in, Minny. Tuck in whatever might fly out my mouth and tuck in my behind too. Look like a maid who does what she’s told” (30). Furthermore, the reader gets to know about her “terrible awful” already before Minny’s presence in the first chapter. However, the meaning of the “terrible awful” is not revealed until later. Still, what the reader could figure out is that she did something with Miss Hilly’s pie. A few pages in the novel Minny calls Aibileen and tells her “‘I ain’t telling. I ain’t telling nobody about that pie. But I give her what she deserve!’ ... Ain’t no game crossing Miss Hilly. ‘I ain’t never gone get no work again, Leroy gone kill me’” 21). This is probably also the reason why she tells herself to tuck it in at Celia’s porch, since she is afraid not to get work ever again. These two examples confirm what Foster-Singletary says: “She is too much – too much woman to be a lady, too much mouth for a maid, too black for her own good” (100). Moreover, the last sentence, “I ain’t never gone get no work again, Leroy gone kill me” (21), indicates that Minny is portrayed as victimized, as Mohanty says coloured people are imagined to be (337). In the end through Minny’s actions she both obeys and resists the hegemonic white culture. Her act with the pie shows her resistance against the white system and its values, but she also tries to conform to the white norm by telling herself “to tuck it in”.

As Edwards says, these system and values were something the hegemony of white culture forced the coloured people to follow (24). Nonetheless, Minny succeeds to get the work. She

begins to work for Celia, although Celia's husband, Mister Johnny, is not allowed to know she works there. This is because Celia wants him to believe she is the one who cooks, and cleans the house. However, one day Mister Johnny comes home early and finds Minny in the house. Minny sees Mister Johnny with an axe in his hand and does not know what to do. "I do the only thing I can do. I wrinkle my face as mean as I can and pull my lips across my teeth and yell: 'You and your axe better get out a my way'" (137).

Again, Stockett puts Minny in a position where, as Foster-Singleton mentions, she represents wild blackness (100). This is also an example of why *The Help* is a narrative of difference and as Singh and Schmidt state "these narratives of difference are narratives of the American nightmare rather than the American dream" (8). The fact that Minny is portrayed as "too black" makes her represent "the other" more and enhances differences. This way of marking her with "cultural and /or genetic traits", as Singh and Schmidt say, makes her a "threatening alien" (8). This could be the reason why she is treated badly throughout the novel by some of the white people. Consequently, it might not be surprising that she does not trust white people. There is an example, in particular, that show this and it is when Miss Skeeter, Aibileen and Minny are discussing the book. "'What makes you think colored people need your help?' Minny stands up, chair scraping. 'Why you even care about this? You white'" (164).

The third character Aibileen is portrayed as a stereotypical maid throughout the novel. She is really attached to Mae Mobley, the white child she takes care of. This is, as Wallace-Sanders says, one of the most consistent characteristics of the stereotypical maid (66). It even goes so far that when Mae Mobley and Aibileen discuss how many children Aibileen has, Mae Mobley says "I know, I'm your real baby" (285). In addition, she is very concerned with Mae Mobley's wellbeing. Several times Aibileen tells her how important she is and when she is

dismissed from her work, she wants May Mobley to remember what she has taught her. “‘Baby Girl’, I say. ‘I need you to remember everything I told you. Do you remember what I told you?’ ... ‘You is kind’, she say, ‘you is smart. You is important’” (443). Aibileen is, however, not only portrayed as the stereotypical maid, the Southern white construction of blackness is shown a number of times in the book. One example is when Mae Mobley goes to Aibileen’s toilet and her mother screams to her “this is dirty out here, Mae Mobley. You’ll catch diseases! No no no!” (95).

In the novel white and black people were supposed to have separate bathrooms since according to the white people, black people were dirty. This in itself tells about one of the many contradictions that occur in the novel. On the one hand, the coloured people are not allowed to use the whites’ bathrooms because they have diseases and are dirty. On the other hand, the white people want them to clean their houses, cook their food and take care of their children. Furthermore, Aibileen compares herself with a cockroach: “That night after supper, me and that cockroach stare at each other down across the kitchen floor. He big, inch, inch an a half. He black. Blacker than me”(189). This could indicate that there are not only the white people who have a patronising attitude towards black people, but Aibileen looks down on herself too. To compare herself with an insect, a pest, is to acknowledge herself as dirty and potentially harmful.

Nevertheless, Aibileen shows something neither Miss Skeeter nor Minny does. Both Miss Skeeter and Minny have prejudices against one another, which Aibileen in some aspects, sees through. In the novel she says to Minny “all I’m saying is, kindness don’t have no boundaries” (312). Here, it implies, as Smith says, that the book actually could be interpreted as the black people trying to humanize the open-minded white people (31). In addition, at the end of the novel there is a sequence when Mae Mobley has coloured herself black in nursery, because she

was told to draw what she liked the most about herself. However, her teacher said to her that black means that she has dirty and bad face. When Aibileen hears about this she feels devastated, “after all the time I spent teaching Mae Mobley how to love all people, not judge by color. I feel a hard fist in my chest because what person out there don’t remember they first-grade teacher? Maybe they don’t remember what they learn, but I’m telling you, I done enough kids to know, they matter” (409). This also shows that Aibileen is the one who actually shows some reasonable thoughts about how the relationship between whites and coloured people could be.

Aibileen works tirelessly raising her employer's child (Aibileen's seventh one) and keeps a tidy house, yet none of this distracts her from the recent loss of her own son who died in an accident at work while his white bosses turned away. Two events bring Skeeter and Aibileen even closer: Skeeter is haunted by a copy of Jim Crow Laws she found in the library, and she receives a letter from a publisher in New York interested in Skeeter's idea of writing the true stories of domestic servants.

Skeeter approaches Aibileen with the idea to write narratives from the point of view of black maids. Aibileen reluctantly agrees, but soon finds herself as engrossed in the project as Skeeter. They meet clandestinely in the evenings at Aibileen's house to write the book together as the town's struggles with race heat up all around them. Aibileen brings in her best friend, Minny, a sassy maid who is repeatedly fired for speaking her mind, to tell her story, too. Hearing their stories changes Skeeter as her eyes open to the true prejudices of her upbringing. Aibileen and Minny also develop a friendship and understanding with Skeeter that neither believed possible.

Along the way, Skeeter learns the truth of what happened to her beloved maid, Constantine. Constantine had given birth, out of wedlock, to Lulabelle who turned out to look white even though both parents were black. Neither the black nor the white community would accept Lulabelle, so Constantine gave her up for adoption when she was four years old. When the little girl grew up, she and Constantine were reunited. While Skeeter was away at college, Lulabelle came to visit her mother in Jackson and showed up at a party being held in Skeeter's mother's living room. When Charlotte Phelan discovered who Lulabelle was, she kicked her out and fired Constantine. Constantine had nowhere else to go, so she moved with her daughter to Chicago and an even worse fate. Skeeter never saw Constantine again.

The story jumps back and forth among the three characters, all of them providing their version of life in the South, the dinner parties, the fund-raising events, the social and racial boundaries, family relationships, friendships, working relationships, poverty, hardship, violence, and fear.

In the meantime Skeeter's book is ready with the fictional locale set in the fictional town of Niceville and published anonymously. It becomes a national bestseller and, soon, the white women of Jackson begin recognizing themselves in the book's characters. Hilly Holbrook, in particular, is set on vengeance due to the details in the book. Hilly and Skeeter grew up best friends, but they then have very different views on race and the future of integration in Mississippi. Hilly, who leads the Junior League and bosses around the other white women in the town, reveals to Stuart, Skeeter's boyfriend, that she found a copy of the Jim Crow laws in Skeeter's purse, which further ostracizes Skeeter from their community. In the end, it is a secret about Hilly that Minny reveals in Skeeter's book that silences Hilly. The book becomes a

powerful force in giving a voice to the black maids and causes the community of Jackson to reconsider the carefully drawn lines between white and black.

Chapter Three

World of Segregation and Injustices

The Help is a story of race relations in American society, both implicit and explicit. Acts of explicit racism are easy to identify because they're often carried out intentionally, embraced by people or organizations that believe people of different races are biologically different. Explicit racism can be seen in the Jim Crow Laws that outline racial segregation, as well as the acts of violence against African American characters in the book. *The Help* provides a detailed description of the events connected with daily lives of Mississippians. Kathryn Stockett demonstrates how strong is the bias of the Whites toward black residents of Jackson by means of numerous examples of racist behaviour. Apart from fictional events, the novel also demonstrates events which actually took place, thus adding authenticity to the work.

Arguably, what differentiates *The Help* from other examples of civil rights literature- which also outline the overt examples of racism like segregation and violence- is its depiction of implicit racism, which isn't necessarily as easy to spot as overt racism. Examples of implicit racism include the widespread belief by many of the novel's white characters that everything is fine in Jackson, Mississippi. Stuart says it best when he suggests that Skeeter is "stirring up trouble" and that everything is fine. While many white characters aren't going out of their way to make life more difficult for African American characters, they don't understand why Skeeter would be interested in the civil rights movement or why domestic workers can't just be content in their role. These characters never question how their treatment of African Americans adds to their exploitation and suffering, nor do they question how the plight of African Americans has contributed to their comfort. Elizabeth for example, remains so oblivious to the effects of her poor treatment that she doesn't even recognize herself in Aibileen's book. Skeeter comes closest

to recognizing her privilege when she realizes that Constantine wouldn't have loved her as much had she been allowed to raise her own daughter. Unfortunately, the realization is fleeting and elicits no further action.

The book clearly depicts the fear of death and brutality that African Americans experienced after Medgar Evers' assassination. When the black inhabitants of Mississippi find out that he was killed by members of the Ku Klux Klan they are scared to death and avoid leaving their homes for fear of being shot. The situation is even more dramatic because of the fact that Evers, the black field secretary for NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) who fought against the Blacks' exploitation, was shot in front of his house right before his children's eyes. Therefore, the Blacks realise that their lives are always under threat just because of their skin colour. As one of the main protagonists of *The Help*, the black maid Aibileen, states:

. . . for days and days, Jackson, Mississippi's like a pot of boiling water. On Miss Leefolt's tee-vee, flocks a colored people march up High Street the day after Mister Evers' funeral. Three hundred arrested. Colored people say thousands of people came to the service, but you could count the whites on one hand. The police know who did it, but they ain't telling nobody his name (196).

This entire event demonstrates that white Mississippians have no compunctions about taking African Americans into custody even if they do not commit any crime. Moreover, white perpetrators always remain unknown to the general public while the Blacks are severely punished for even slight conflicts with the Whites.

The plight of African Americans in the United States is the phenomenon which has been widely studied by scholars and academics from different disciplines. Racism has been experienced by the Blacks since slavery was introduced in the USA as a system after 1619 landing of the first group of Africans in Jamestown. This fact makes us realise that the USA has a long history of gradually changing relationships between black and white Americans.

Since the introduction of slavery as a system in 1661 in Virginia, American history of racism has been fraught with series of ups and downs in relationship between white Americans and African Americans. This was a point of history when the conflict between them began. African Americans were treated as if they were inferior. They worked for a long time, sometimes from sunset to sunrise. The system of oppression lasted until it was abolished before the end of the American Civil War in 1865.

The introduction of the Thirteen Amendment to the United States Constitution changed the lives of African Americans completely. From this moment on African Americans, former slaves, were considered human beings and they also were given the right to vote. They started to educate themselves and, what was more important for them, were allowed to possess their own land. Furthermore, a year later, in 1866 the first Civil Rights Act was enacted. It strengthened the position of African Americans by giving them American citizenship and therefore all are equal before the law. But racial discrimination did not disappear as African Americans still were considered inferior and subservient. In some states, especially in the South, white Americans strived to prevent them from exercising the right to vote by means of literacy tests and high poll taxes. Moreover, the Blacks were paid less than white Americans for the same work.

During World War I, African Americans started to migrate in large numbers to Western and Northern America. They hoped that this would give them a better chance of gaining knowledge and a rewarding, well-paid job. However, many black people became unemployed as they were not educated or skilled enough to take up a job. As a result, it was difficult for them to make both their ends meet. Many of them lived in abject poverty inhabiting slums.

Some of the black Americans started to achieve success in a large number of fields after World War II. For instance, Gwendolyn Brooks won a Pulitzer Prize for poetry, Sidney Poitier won an Academy Award for Best Actor, and Hulan Jack became the first black Manhattan borough president. Though the lives of some African Americans improved considerably, most of them still suffered from acute poverty or unemployment (Greenberg 2009: 29-31).

The next historical event which the author includes in *The Help* is the long struggle of African Americans against Jim Crow laws. Stockett incorporates into her narration a description of the sit-in protest at Brown's Drug Store. Minny Jackson, the black maid, states that "a bunch of white teenagers stand behind the five protesters on their stools, jeering and jabbing, pouring ketchup and mustard and salt all over their heads" (219). The event clearly displays the white teenagers' strong prejudicial attitudes, as well as racial hatred and aggression toward the Blacks. Stockett suggests that white children are taught by their parents and teachers from a very young age to hate the Blacks as the white adults want to prevent from their integration (12). Then it is difficult or even impossible for the white teenagers to get rid of racial stereotypes and behaviour.

Another important aspect of Jim Crow laws demonstrated in the novel is the huge division between white Americans and African Americans concerning facilities used by them. The humiliating set of rules and regulations stated that the black inhabitants of Jackson are not

allowed to use shops, restaurants, and libraries reserved for the Whites only. The black maids Aibileen and Minny, sometimes have to buy something in the shops for the Whites for the white families they work for. However, they can enter the shop provided that they wear white uniforms.

What is important to notice is the fact that the schools, libraries, and shops attended by the Blacks are completely different from the ones attended by the Whites. This is illustrated in a description of the shop for the Blacks called Piggly Wiggly “with the potatoes having inch-long eyes and the milk almost sour” (42). In addition, it is essential to mention that when the Blacks refuse to adhere to Jim Crow laws they are severely punished. For instance, Skeeter says that when there was a sit-in protest at the white library a few years ago, “the police department simply stepped back and turned the German shepherds loose” (154).

Stockett also stresses the fact that black inhabitants of Jackson can hardly make ends meet due to racial discrimination in terms of employment. They are given only menial jobs such as maids, charwomen, and fast-food workers which are, of course, low-paid. In addition, their white employers perpetuate racial stereotypes about the Blacks’ aggression, laziness, irresponsibility, and lack of intelligence. Thus, the black residents of Jackson often live in abject poverty inhabiting the poorest part of the city, which is clearly exemplified by means of a description of Hotstack, Constantine’s neighbourhood.

When Skeeter recollects one day of walking along the neighbourhood with Constantine she remembers “the colored five-and-dime store, then a grocer with hens laying in back, and all along the way, dozens of shabby-looking roadside houses with tin roofs and slanting porches” (61). Living in such poor conditions causes the black characters of *The Help* want to change their

lives fraught with pain, hunger, and suffering. As a result, it leads to taking part in violent demonstrations, like the one in the library described by Skeeter. Therefore, Stockett, by combining the actual historical events with the fictional ones, offers a true representation of the interracial relationship between inhabitants of Mississippi which at that time was regarded as one of the most racially oppressive states in the USA (Watson 2010: 10).

The Help offers a multitude of such examples of racial discrimination against black inhabitants of Jackson, Mississippi. Almost every white character portrayed in the novel shows hatred toward the Blacks and treats them with scorn and contempt as if they were second-class citizens without full rights and benefits.

The characters of *The Help* have to deal with different forms of racism on a daily basis. However, most often they are victims of overt racism, which manifests itself in hatred and contempt towards other people due to their belonging to a different race. It is characterised by assumptions of racial superiority made by the white people who consider them to be better in terms of intelligence or personality traits. This type of racism is omnipresent in the prejudiced community of Jackson, which is clearly pointed out by Hilly Holbrook's negative behaviour towards her black maid Minny Jackson and the black maid, Aibileen Clark, who works for her friend Elizabeth Leefolt. She also adds that the Blacks "are likely to go to the local voodoo tent and get a satanic tattoo with [their] money" (175). The entire event displays Hilly's patronising attitude toward the Blacks and lack of respect for them.

What is more, when Holbrook meets her friends at Elizabeth's house for a weekly bridge game, she says that African Americans disseminate different kinds of diseases and that she wants to maintain separation of black maids from white families by means of separate bathrooms for

the maids. She tries to pass a bill which would require all Mississippians to build outdoor bathrooms for their black maids which she calls “a disease-preventive measure” (8). As a result, after a few days Aibileen has to use a separate bathroom outside the Leefolt’s house. Moreover, “Hilly raises her voice about three octaves higher when she talks to colored people” (157). Her manner of speaking demonstrates that she treats African Americans as if they were inferior and not as intelligent as the Whites. What is more, when Hilly finds out that Aibileen helped Skeeter to write a book about the black maids in Jackson employed by white Americans (including Hilly and Elizabeth), Hilly makes Elizabeth dismiss Aibileen accusing the black maid in a completely unjustified way of stealing her three pieces of cutlery.

The matter of overt racism is also highlighted by a racist attitude of Elizabeth Leefolt who blindly follows Hilly Holbrook. When her little daughter, Mae Mobley, uses Aibileen’s bathroom, Elizabeth tells her that Aibileen is dirty and diseased. Therefore, Leefolt enforces prevailing racist behaviours and attitudes. This situation reveals that due to adults’ prejudice toward the Blacks, racism is handed down over the ages from generation to generation.

Yet another incident is presented with overt racism through Robert’s case. The grandson of the black maid Louvenia Brown is beaten with a tire iron by the Whites after using the unmarked bathroom reserved for white Americans at Pinchman Lawn and Garden. As a result of the beating, he becomes blind. Stockett also mentions the Whites burnt the house of Aibileen’s cousin, Shinelle, in Cauter Country because of her participation in elections. The next example of overt racism can be seen when white Americans cut off the tongue of Aibileen’s husband’s cousin as she talked with somebody from Washington about the Ku Klux Klan.

It is essential to mention that Aibileen “work[s] for Miss Leefolt eight to four, six days a week except Saturdays” (16). She gets “forty-three dollars [every] Friday, which come[s] to \$172 a month” (16) and she is afraid to even ask Leefolt for minimum wage even if she hardly makes ends meet. She is dismissed “when the babies get too old and stop being color-blind” (128). It is said that Aibileen raised seventeen children, which means that she had to change her job many times. Furthermore, according to Mills, anything that happen[s] during the course of any day a black woman work[s] in a white home [is] almost invariably her fault. [...] If a white child fell, it [is] because the black woman [is] not attentive enough. If the biscuits [are] burned or the chicken slightly undercooked, then, in the absence of slavery-sanctioned corporeal punishment, docked wages-or firing-would be the result (Mills 2016: XII).

The next example of racism pointed out is the way in which the Whites treat Aibileen’s son, Treelore, who dies two years before the novel opens, when he was 24. One rainy night when he works at the Scanlon-Taylor mill “lugging two-by-fours to the truck, splinters slicing all the way through the glove” (2) he slips off the loading dock and falls down the drive. The person who operates a tractor-trailer does not notice Treelore and crushes his lungs. Then “his broken body [is] thrown on the back of a pickup by the white foreman” (153). By the time Aibileen finds out about the accident Treelore is dead. As the maid states, Treelore was “too small for that kind of work, too skinny, but he needed a job” (2). Treelore’s case shows that white employers do not consider their black employees’ safety as an important issue. African Americans are given the most physically demanding jobs which often are also the most dangerous. This situation clearly indicates that Treelore, like other young black men, had no other possibility to earn money for his family but to take up a low-paid, menial job.

There are also examples of racism, manifested itself in unequal distribution of goods and resources. The work of Sam Porter reveals that “individuals will enjoy more or less powerful enabling positions in a society depending on how they are categorised in racist terms” (Porter 1993: 597). This unequal distribution existed a long time ago and now people are put within some kind of groups whose members are given more or less powerful positions than others. For instance, the Whites show their supremacy over the Blacks when they do not allow them to expand into white neighbourhoods. Even if they live in the same town, according to Skeeter, “the colored part of town seems so far away when, evidently, it’s only a few miles from the white part of town.” (143). The false accusation ruins Minny’s reputation and creates an enormous problem for her to find a job as the white residents of Jackson consider the Whites to be honest and trustworthy while maintaining that the Blacks do not deserve to be trusted. The white Mississippians completely believe in the rightness of Hilly’s accusation. They do not even assume that it is a part of her plan to get revenge on Minny for using the Holbrooks’ toilet during a brutal storm.

Stockett also illustrates how the Blacks have to obey rigid Jim Crow laws which maintain the racial hierarchy stressing white supremacy and control over African Americans. They, forming secret organizations like the Ku Klux Klan which promoted white supremacy, terrorized their black neighbours at night wearing masks and costumes to terrify the Blacks. During the Reconstruction era, in 1877 there were also strict Jim Crow laws legislated. This humiliating set of rules and regulations officially segregated the Blacks and the Whites throughout the Southern States of America affecting almost every sphere of their life (Fisher 2006: 48-49). This humiliating set of rules prevents them from living decent lives as the Blacks are deprived of even basic facilities. It is worth mentioning that when African Americans refuse to obey these rules,

these groups fight against them. Its members often terrorise the Blacks, burn their houses, beat them, and shoot to death for not obeying Jim Crow laws.

It is worth mentioning that African American women in *The Help* are treated much more harshly than black men as they are burdened by the stigma of race as well as the stigma of sex. Not only are they mistreated by white Mississippians but also by their husbands and fathers. For instance, Minny Jackson, the black maid working for the Holbrooks, had really difficult childhood due to her “no-good drunk daddy” (38) because of whom she was about to drop out of school in order to support her family. After school she spent much of her time performing household chores such as cooking and cleaning. The situation experienced by the Jacksons clearly reveals that only women were responsible for earning their livelihood while men did nothing but drowned their sorrows in alcohol. What is more, when Minny starts her own family she is constantly beaten by her husband Leroy who often also shouts at her. At the end of the novel Leroy even tries to kill Minny as he finds out that he lost his job because of his wife. He does not hit Minny only when she is pregnant, which is why Minny gets pregnant all the time and they have five children. In addition, when Minny talks with Aibileen, her best friend, she says that “plenty of black men leave their families behind like trash in a dump, but it’s just not something the colored woman do. [They’ve] got the kids to think about” (310-311).

The next woman who suffers owing to being a woman and her skin colour is Aibileen – the black maid who works for the Leefolts. As a young teenager she had to drop out of school to support her family by working as a maid. She was, therefore, deprived of a normal, happy childhood. Then, when her son Treelore was born, her dark-skinned husband Clyde left her to raise the child alone. Thus, Stockett depicts black males in her book in a negative light, making black maids victims of their husbands’ and fathers’ brutal and inhumane behaviour.

The black maids portrayed in *The Help* are often mistreated by their fathers and husbands. However, the author focuses mostly on demonstrating dehumanizing and humiliating working conditions experienced by them. Stockett makes the reader realise that in the small community of Jackson, where racism permeates all aspects of life, “no concept of equality [can] govern maid/mistress interactions in the homes of whites just as no concept of equality govern[s] the society in which these women [are] employed” (Mills 2016: XII). As an example of dealing with humiliation Stockett describes Aibileen Clark raising her eighteenth white child, Mae Mobley, the daughter of the Leefolts. The maid faces racial discrimination and prejudice on a daily basis. Even though she does her best taking care of Elizabeth Leefolt’s child, cooking, and cleaning, she is not appreciated by her employer. Conversely, Aibileen is frequently reprimanded by her, for example, when she talks with Elizabeth’s friend Skeeter during her working hours. Such a situation shows that she is treated like Leefolt’s property. In addition, Aibileen is used to be given worn-out clothes by her white employers. The black maid, who lives in abject poverty, has no choice but to wear clothes which earlier belonged to her white employers as she does not possess enough money to buy new ones.

What is important to mention is the fact that Aibileen, who is treated like a second-class human being, never complains of being tired and discriminated. Moreover, Aibileen never talks back to Leefolt as well as to her racially prejudiced friend Hilly who often offends African Americans by creating and perpetuating racial stereotypes showing the Blacks as unintelligent, dirty, and lazy. Nevertheless, Aibileen perseveres in overcoming all the obstacles of her life without feeling sorry for herself.

The next example of prejudiced treatment of black maids is demonstrated by the case of Constantine, who was employed by the Phelans. Skeeter, the Phelans’ daughter, “praises

Constantine as a nurturer who would bring her home to the black segregated side of town simply due to the love that she had for the white child in her care” (68). Nevertheless, after working for Phelan family for twenty-nine years Constantine was dismissed by Charlotte Phelan, Skeeter’s mother, due to Constantine’s illegitimate daughter’s rude behaviour. What was even more cruel, Charlotte told Lulabelle that “[her] mama hadn’t been sick a day in her life. She [had given Lulabelle] up because [she was] too high yellow” (364). However, what is essential to note is the fact that Constantine gave her daughter for adoption as “being [African American] with white skin [...] in Mississippi it’s like you don’t belong to nobody” (358). When Constantine was noticed with her white daughter “[w]hite folks would stop her, ask her all suspicious what she doing toting round a white child. [...] Even colored folks... they treat[ed] her differently, distrustful, like she [had] done something wrong.” (358). By means of Constantine’s case Stockett stresses the fact that “[b]lack women are expected to love their white families unconditionally” (68) and devote considerable efforts to performing household chores as effectively as possible while white Americans do not pay attention to their emotions, mistreating and humiliating them all the time.

The black maids in *The Help*, therefore, are treated unequally by their white employers even though they are indispensable for their families. For instance, African American maids’ salaries do not correspond to the great effort put into their jobs. Minny, after working as a maid for five years, is paid one dollar per hour, which makes her “feeling kind of ashamed” (37) as she is paid below the legal minimum wage. Similarly, Aibileen is paid by the Leefolts 172 dollars a month, working from eight to four o’clock, as a result of which she barely makes ends meet. Stockett demonstrates in her book that because of such appallingly low salaries the black maids and their families live in a deep poverty. For instance, when Minny was fourteen, “[b]irthdays were the

only day of the year [she] was allowed to eat as much as [she] wanted” (38). Thus, as a result of poor living conditions together with unfair treatment by the white community the Blacks tend to have a lower self-esteem than the Whites.

This phenomenon is illustrated in Aibileen’s case when she sits in her kitchen after supper and observes a big cockroach. She compares this insect to herself noticing that it is blacker than she is. Furthermore, Aibileen feels her inferiority to white Americans not only due to her colour of skin, but also because of her ancestry. When she is asked by Skeeter, who writes a book about the plight of black female domestic workers in the USA, whether she always thought she would be a maid, Aibileen replies in an affirmative manner. The black maid tells her that she knew that she was going to work as a maid as her mother was a maid and her grandmother had been a house slave. Aibileen does not even consider looking for another job as she finds it impossible for her to get a job which would provide her with sufficient income, a sense of accomplishment, and overall satisfaction.

The Help is also fraught with references to racist incidents suffered by black maids which are mentioned in the conversations of the main characters of the novel. For instance, when Aibileen talks with her black colleague Ernestine, who works for the Holbrooks, she finds out that Flora Lou, a black maid employed by Miss Hester “who everybody think is real sweet” (433), was given “a special ‘hand wash’ to use ever morning” (433). As Ernestine says, it turned out to be “straight bleach” (433). As a result, Flora Lou had a burn scar which she showed Ernestine. In addition, during Minny’s conversation with Aibileen they recall unpleasant incidents connected with Minny’s former racist white employers. As an example, Aibileen brings up the memory of Mister Charlie who thought it had been funny to humiliate Minny by name-calling and insults and his wife “who [made her] eat lunch outside, even in the middle a January,

[...] even when it snowed that time” (227). Then, when Aibileen starts to talk about the incident connected with Miss Roberta she cannot stop laughing as the white employer made Minny “sit at the kitchen table while she [was trying out] her new dye solution on [Minny]” (227). This caused Minny’s hair became blue and, according to her husband Leroy, she “look[ed] like a craker from outer space” (227). The situation was certainly not so funny for Minny as it “took three weeks and twenty-five dollars to get [her] hair black again” (227). Therefore, all the events illustrate that black female domestic workers were frequently abused in numerous ways. They were accustomed to being treated like sub-humans and facing hardships on a daily basis.

What is essential to note is the fact that by taking up this monumental task the black maids put their lives at risk. This illustrates that they are ready to resort to the most desperate measures in order to avoid abuse. Through analysing shameful living and working conditions faced especially by black maids, whose lives are always under threat due to their colour of skin, *The Help* makes people aware of the problem of white supremacy and the damaging consequences of racist behaviour towards the Blacks. Together with the film of the same title as the book, which was released in 2011, *The Help* contributed a lot to changing white Americans’ perception of African Americans. The novel as well as the film of the same title based on Stockett’s book serve as an eye-opener to racially prejudiced white Americans helping them discern huge number of problems dealt with by the Blacks which were largely ignored or glossed over by the Whites over the centuries. It does not mean that *The Help* had great influence on all its readers and immediately opened their eyes on the obstacles the Blacks face every day. Nevertheless, such a production as *The Help* is a big step in fighting against racial discrimination towards African Americans which is still present in the USA today.

Chapter Four

Black Feminism

From the very beginning of formation of family as a social institution, women were always considered as an inferior gender. In fact, the families were the first agents that oppressed women because of different ideologies of the time as Walter claims that “For centuries, and all over Europe, there were families who disposed of ‘unnecessary’ or unmarried daughters by shutting them away in convents” (Walter 1). Not only has been this idea dominant among uneducated people, but literary people also suffer from this ideology. The tension among women to demand their rights in different terms from nineteenth century as Schmitz imposes that “Women’s struggle for equal rights in the Western world began in the nineteenth century” (Schmitz 176). However this approach started to establish formally and female equality was considered important in twentieth century as Schmitz continues that “. . . it was not until the first half of the twentieth century that the main demands of women were fulfilled in most Western countries,...” (166). In fact feminism has challenged all the ideologies regarding the stereotypes about women.

The feministic thought started to affect different fields particularly literature and literary criticism based on feminism was formed in which political, social, economic and psychological oppression of women were analyzed. Among females, women of colours are marginalized not only by their own male society, but also by the white community because of their race. So it can be said that these women are ‘double marginalized’. Hence there arose a feminist movement in to their own community for their needs. This need was considered as serious once black feminism was introduced. This movement was effective in a way that it could provide social

support for them as Stanlie made it “African-American Women in Defense of Ourselves, a self-described grassroots initiative of 1,603 women from the academy, the arts and the community, serves as an example of Black women challenging external /internal oppressions” (1993).

In the 1960s alongside with other feminist movements, black feminism started to shape in which different forces were considered important and issues of black females were addressed. Harris claims: Womanist theology and ethics made its initial break into academic discourse in 1985 with the publication of an article by Katie G. Cannon entitled “The Emergence of Black Feminist Consciousness,” wherein she described how black women scholars in the fields of theology, ethics, biblical studies, and the history and sociology of religion “had begun problematizing and critiquing the ways racist, sexist, and classist ideologies were sewn into dominant Christian, feminist, and black liberation theological perspectives”. (Harris 143)

There have been different philosophers in black feminist movements who contributed to this movement a big deal. One of the most important socialists is Patricia Hill Collins (1948) whose work is a cross field of race, class and gender and the effects on these issues in society. Stolley claims that “Her work on the intersections of race, social class, and gender has expanded sociological and feminist analysis to show how these systems have complex and interlocking effects” (3). In her idea oppression can be felt individually, within a group and in different systems in society. “To Collins, oppression is experienced and resisted at three levels: personal biography, group or community, within the cultural context created by race, class, and gender, and social institutions (2000)” (33). Her works reflect the importance of whole people to reach a thorough image of society. In her view, black females are stereotyped in society and they are associated with different and negative characteristics. Harris and Watson quotes from Plamer and Meht that “Collins presents several prevailing stereotypes that have contributed to the continued

oppression of African American women in the United States: mammy, black matriarch, welfare mother, black lady, and jezebel” (69). By these stereotypes and conceptions by which black females are presented, they are oppressed; “Collins maps out five predominant controlling images that have functioned to objectify and oppress African American women” (Harris and Watson 69).

In Kathryn Stockett’s novel *The Help* this stereotyped images of black women- mammy, black matriarch, welfare mother, black lady, were presented so effectively from the very beginning that it was adapted for a movie in Hollywood. Martin claims that “Kathryn Stockett’s novel *The Help* has been a popular sensation since its initial publication. The book was a national bestseller and was quickly turned into a critically acclaimed film” (2). Also like the novel, the movie was so dramatic that it was appreciated by critics. Sladkova claims that “Given the fact that *The Help* has become an American best-seller, and a movie was based upon it (which was not only successful, but also nominated for Academy Awards 2012)” (Sladkova 5). Kathryn Stockett was raised by an African maid after her parents’ divorce. It can be said that her obsession with black females is reflected in her novels. “Growing up, Kathryn Stockett was raised with a black maid, Demetrie. *The Help* grew out of a question that Stockett was never able to ask Demetrie regarding her treatment and her experiences working as a maid for a white family in Mississippi during the tumultuous decade of the 1960s.” (Martin 2).

Stockett’s feelings about her hometown are contradictory; embarrassment and pride at the same time and these could be felt in her novel. “In interviews, Stockett describes her feelings about her native state of Mississippi as being characterized by both pride and shame, but mostly pride. These attitudes are fully reflected in the text of *The Help*” (Martin 2). Different sensitive and controversial subjects are being presented in the novel. In addition to racism, the novel has

instances of domestic abuse, a Peeping Tom, and miscarriage. There are several uses of profanity in the novel as well” (Martin 2). The different aspects of black females are presented, their social, cultural and economic status and the way they are oppressed by society are reflected throughout the novel. Suastife claims that “In the novel of *The Help* written by Kathryn Stockett in 2009, the writer shows the representation of racial discrimination in America” (33). Also the stereotypes of the black people as lower and inferior group of people are reflected in the novel and that is the reason of their oppression. “The black people get the racial discrimination because they are regarded as diseases, because they are black and dirty” (33).

The image of mammy refers to the image of black woman as a faithful and obedient woman who devotes herself utterly to life of the white family for whom she is working. She can change into an ideal symbol of devotion “By loving, nurturing, and caring for her White children and “family” better than her own” (Collins 72), so she remains dominant and submissive forever. In order for a black woman to be a good one, she should be a ‘mammy’ that means she should be a “the faithful, obedient domestic servant” (Collins 72). The ideology tries to make the black woman the way the dominant group wants. To do so, she tries so hard and maybe considered as respectable however “the mammy still knows her “place” as obedient servant. She has accepted her subordination” (Collins 72- 73).

Actually it can be said it is the mammy who transmit the ideology of dominant group directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously so she is the agent of oppression since “Black mothers are encouraged to transmit to their own children the deference behavior that many are forced to exhibit in their mammified jobs” and hence “The mammy image is central to intersecting oppressions of race, gender, sexuality, and class” (Collins 73).

The picture of mammy is an omnipresent picture throughout the novel and this image is associated with almost all the helps in the novel particularly Aibileen as she says that, “You already up, Baby Girl? Why you didn’t holler for me?” She laughs, dances a little happy jig waiting on me to get her out. I give her a good hug. I reckon she don’t get too many good hugs like this after I go home” (13). After reading the novel, it could be understood that Aibileen’s son has been killed by white people however she could find comfort raising white children and they can fulfill the role of her son for her as she narrates that “Five months after the funeral, I lifted myself up out a bed. I put on my white uniform and put my little gold cross back around my neck and I went to wait on Miss Leefolt cause she just have her baby girl” (10-11).

It has been argued that the image of mammy is transferred mostly by the black women to their own daughters so this negative image which is necessary for suppression of black women would never disappear since “By teaching Black children their assigned place in White power structures, Black women who internalize the mammy image potentially become effective conduits for perpetuating racial oppression” (Collins 73).

In the novel the training of the children particularly daughters can be realized so that the transferring image of mammy from one generation to another generation survives as in case of Minny and her daughter as “Last week, Minny started bringing Sugar to work. She getting her trained for when Minny have her baby and Sugar gone have to fill in for her. Tonight Miss Celia ask Sugar to work late, say she drive her Home” (692).

The second image that has been developed by white dominant group is the issue of being mother in a black family which is in sharp contrast to the image of being a mother for the children of white people. Mostly these black females are to be blamed for the social problems of

black society since “Spending too much time away from home, these working mothers ostensibly could not properly supervise their children and thus were a major contributing factor to their children’s failure at...”(Collins 75) different social segments of the society. Under such condition, the image of black woman has been distorted and they are portrayed as negative mothers at home. Therefore the social problems arisen from black society are not due to the improper situation created by white society but by the poor training which is the result of absence of black mothers at home and spending time at white people. In the novel the image of matriarch is associated with Minny as she knows that she is ignoring her own children and life because she has to work. So she thinks with herself:

I try to concentrate on the week. Tomorrow’s heavy cooking and I’ve got the church supper Saturday night and the service on Sunday. When am I going to clean my own house? Wash my own kids’ clothes? My oldest girl, Sugar, is sixteen and pretty good about keeping things neat, but I like to help her out on the weekends the way my mama never helped me. (241)

This suppressing image of black woman accounts for poor manner of black children in the society and later the economic and social problems that they are to confront so that society and mostly white people should not be blamed because “dominant ideology suggests that Black children lack the attention and care allegedly lavished on White, middle-class children” (Collins 76). This image in the novel is confirmed when Skeeter asks following question from Aibileen: “Alright. Then ... what does it feel like, to raise a white child when your own child’s at home, being ...” I swallow, embarrassed by the question, “... looked after by someone else?” (257) and when Aibileen answers that “I—I spec I like looking after the kids best” (257) shows that the black females accept the image of matriarch. This image is in opposite to what has been said

above; the images of mammy and matriarch which complete each other are related to activity and being active of black females in working for white people so they do not have time to spend for their own family however this image does not hold true for welfare mother. This image creates some issues for black females and stereotypes them. It makes them needy who are not able to “pass on the work ethic...” (79) to their children.

They produce a lot of children but since they are lazy and are not living with men who support them they remain economically weak. In the novel mostly the case of Minny and her husband implies the image of welfare. In one incident, the behaviour of her husband as a dominant person justifies this image as Minny says that “Shoot. He strut around the kitchen like a plumed rooster cause he in front a the kids,” I say. “Act like he the only one supporting the family and I’m just doing this to keep my poor self-entertained”(85). This negative image is so widespread that dominates among black society. It results into hatred of the children of their mothers since they regard them as responsible for the situation that they are facing and even if they have social problems, the black welfare mothers are to be blamed because they could not pass the moral disciplines and ethics to their own children as in case of Minny and her children in which Minny is the one who produces a lot of children and could not provide a proper training for them; she says: Mama, fix me something to eat. I’m hungry.” That’s what my youngest girl, Kindra, who’s five, said to me last night. With a hand on her hip and her foot stuck out. I have five kids and I take pride that I taught them yes ma’am and please before they could even say cookie. All except one. “You ain’t having nothing till supper,” I told her. “Why you so mean to me? I hate you,” she yelled and ran out the door.

I set my eyes on the ceiling because that’s a shock I will never get used to, even with four before her. The day your child says she hates you, and every child will

go through the phase, it kicks like a foot in the stomach. But Kindra, Lord. It's not just a phase I'm seeing. That girl is turning out just like me. (95)

Superficially this image should be much better than those three images that have been presented above. This image refers to the social status of black women as successful subjects in their social life. In this image, black lady is not a slave or economically exploited. She is not lazy and she is not taking care of white children. Even she is not to raise her own children she is not a woman anymore. She is hardworking not in domestic and field jobs but in respected jobs in the society and because they want to abolish the images of mammy, matriarch and welfare, she would be stripped of every quality which is associated with being a female and “ they become less feminine” (Collins 81). Although they try to be an ideal and symbol in their society, they fail hence “black women are responsible for the disadvantaged status of African Americans” (Lubiano 335).

Accordingly it can be concluded that black females do not prosper in their private life when they are married because they are deprived of the trickiest weapon of a woman which is femininity and being gentle. In the novel there is no image of a black female as a black lady since almost none of them had the opportunity to study. However Skeeter, the white woman who is helping them to gather their experiences and share them can be associated with the role of a black lady since she has always been into studying and working and she fails at making relation with opposite sex.

There are different incidents regarding Skeeter that shows this white woman who wants to help the black females is looking her femininity gradually. While she has a date, she says that “I sigh. I guess it's because I'm a big person and have never felt petite or particularly feminine or

girly, but that tractor. It just seems to sum up so much” (214). In another incident her mother teaches her how to behave before men. She says: “And don’t forget to smile. Men don’t want a girl who’s moping around all night, and don’t sit like some squaw.

Indian, cross your—” “Wait, my legs or my ank—” “Your ankles. Don’t you remember anything from Missus Rheimer’s etiquette class? And just go ahead and lie and tell him you go to church every Sunday, and whatever you do, do not crunch your ice at the table, it’s awful. Oh, and if the conversation starts to lag, you tell him about our second cousin who’s a city councilman in Kosciusko ... (302)

It has been discussed that one of the most important ways of oppression of black people by white society is to assign stereotypes to black people in different forms. These stereotypes become accusation against black people and public always regard them by such pictures that are mostly negative. One of these pictures which are always associated with black people is their sexual deviation. So most of the black men are categorized as rapist and black women are labeled as whores so when a black woman is raped by a white male is not a crime “ Because efforts to control Black women’s sexuality lie at the heart of Black women’s oppression, historical jezebels and contemporary “hoochies” represent a deviant Black female sexuality” (Collins 81). This image aims to relegate all Black women to the category of sexually aggressive women so it could justify the widespread sexual assaults by White men typically reported by Black slave women.

Also another function of this image accounts for the high rate of reproduction in black society so it is the black woman who is to blame for economic problems. To summarize this

image, Collins believes: Taken together, these prevailing images of Black womanhood represent elite White male interests in defining Black women's sexuality and fertility. Moreover, by meshing smoothly with intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, and sexuality, they help justify the social practices that characterize the matrix of domination in the United States. (Collins 84) This image can be found in the novel when Skeeter and her mom are talking about black females particularly Constantine and her mother says that "They're different that way, you know. Those people have children and don't think about the consequences until it's too late." (633). In another incident of the book, it could be understood that black females are always target of being harassed by white male but the question remains; who should he be blamed? "Angry stories come out, of white men who've tried to touch them. Winnie said she was forced over and over." (Collins 454)

Different ways of oppression could be found in the novel, one such was the work of ideology and stereotypes. These stereotypes were like infectious diseases that could take over the minds of people and could be transferred from one generation to another generation. It means that the children of white people from the very beginning were subject to such images and their minds were occupied by the racist ideas. Also it was understood that the black people were always oppressed by economic situation in which they have to do the most of the works and get the least payment. It could be seen that the black maids were forced to do the most difficult jobs and in return they get the money that was not enough. This economic situation make them always work as it has been claimed that "We never was lazy cause we used to really work. We used to work like mens. Oh, fight sometime, fuss sometime, but worked on" (Simonsen 39).

The other important way of oppression that was discussed throughout was the law of marriage in racist American society in which interracial marriages were forbidden by state law.

The law at that time stated that white men could not marry black men because they are not from the same class and race in society. Therefore the white men were not worried about getting married with black women since “Propertied White men have exploited, objectified, and refused to marry African- American women and have held out trappings of power to their poorer brothers who endorse this ideology” (Collins 162). This injustice against colored women make them the most victimized subject in both societies and when they give birth to children, their own children are not treated as usual and they have to give their own children up since it is against the norms of both societies. It is the law here which gives advantage to white men of society in which there would be no responsibility and consequence to follow.

However it can be claimed that black women are responsible for their own situation. On one hand, they are obedient servants that they do not demand their rights so that they can be manipulated easily by white and black male society. On the other hand, white children from the very beginning of their birth are trained and raised by black females and the way that they are brought up and treated by them, the ideology is transferred.

As rich as this book is in both characterization and plot, its real accomplishment is that it encouraged to examine the prejudices. Racism has always been a frustrating topic to think about, as has sexism. Stockett, a southern white woman herself, exposes this possibility with an experienced sympathy. Using a variety of characters, she demonstrates how many Southerners in this particular chapter of the nation's history weren't racist because they were mean-spirited or elitists, but because tradition and bogus science had supported their belief. Foolish traditions, yes, but they were able to be easily convinced that a separate toilet was not only desirable but necessary because they lacked scientific understanding about germs and contamination and

genetics. The only thing available to counter such painfully offensive actions was personal reflection and perhaps, their consciences.

More over what was really eye opening were the attitudes of "the help", and how their own actions and attitudes were also heavily influenced by tradition and fear - as much so as their white counterparts. Whites, with control and power, dosed out injustice after injustice that was defended by their fear and blacks adjusted to the degradation based on their own learning and fear.

Chapter Five

Summation

Kathryn Stockett was an American writer. *The Help* is set in the early 1960s in Jackson, Mississippi, and told primarily from the first-person perspectives of three women: Aibileen Clark, Minny Jackson, and Eugenia "Skeeter" Phelan. Aibileen is a maid who takes care of children and cleans. Her own 24-year-old son, Treelore died from an accident on his job. In the story, she is tending the Leefolt household and caring for their toddler, Mae Mobley. Minny is Aibileen's friend who frequently tells her employers what she thinks of them, resulting in her having been fired from nineteen jobs. Minny's most recent employer was Mrs. Walters, mother of Hilly Holbrook.

Skeeter is the daughter of a wealthy white family who owns Longleaf, a cotton farm and formerly a plantation, outside Jackson. Many of the field hands and household help are African Americans. Skeeter has just returned home after graduating from the University of Mississippi and wants to become a writer. Skeeter's mother wants her to get married and thinks her degree is just a pretty piece of paper. Skeeter is curious about the disappearance of Constantine, her maid who brought her up and cared for her. Constantine had written to Skeeter while she was away from home in college saying what a great surprise she had awaiting her when she came home. Skeeter's mother tells her that Constantine quit and went to live with relatives in Chicago. Skeeter does not believe that Constantine would leave her like this; she knows something is wrong and believes that information will eventually come out. Everyone Skeeter asks about the unexpected disappearance of Constantine pretends it never happened and avoids giving her any real answers.

The life Constantine led while being the help to the Phelan family leads Skeeter to the realization that her friends' maids are treated very differently from the way the white employees are treated. She decides (with the assistance of a publisher) that she wants to reveal the truth about being a colored maid in Mississippi. Skeeter struggles to communicate with the maids and gain their trust. The dangers of writing a book about African Americans speaking out in the South during the early 1960s hover constantly over the three women.

Eventually, Skeeter wins Aibileen's trust through a friendship which develops while Aibileen helps Skeeter write a household tips column for the local newspaper. Skeeter accepted the job to write the column as a stepping stone to becoming a writer/editor, as was suggested by Elaine Stein, editor at Harper & Row, even though she knows nothing about cleaning or taking care of a household, since that is the exclusive domain of 'the help.' The irony of this is not lost on Skeeter, and she eventually offers to pay Aibileen for the time and expertise she received from her.

Elaine Stein had also suggested to Skeeter that she find a subject to write about which she can be dedicated to and passionate about. Skeeter realizes that she wants to expose to the world in the form of a book the deplorable conditions the maids in the South endure in order to barely survive. Unfortunately, such an exposé is a dangerous proposition, not just for Skeeter, but for any maids who agree to help her. Aibileen finally agrees to tell her story. Minny, despite her distrust of whites, eventually agrees as well, and she and Aibileen are unable to convince others to tell their stories. Skeeter researches several laws governing what blacks still can and cannot do in Mississippi, and her growing opposition to the racial order results in her being shunned by her social circle.

Yule May, Hilly's maid, is arrested for stealing one of Hilly's rings to pay her twin sons' college tuition after Hilly refused to lend the money. The other maids decide that they are willing to take a chance with their jobs, and their safety, and join the book project.

The thrust of the book is the collaborative project between the white Skeeter and the struggling, exploited "colored" help, who together are writing a book of true stories about their experiences as the 'help' to the white women of Jackson. Not all the stories are negative, and some describe beautiful and generous, loving and kind events; while others are cruel and even brutal. The book, entitled "Help" is finally published, and the final chapters of "The Help" describes the aftermath of the book's success.

The Help is a novel that polarizes and evokes controversial opinions. As Stockett has already pointed out many times, her motivation for writing this novel was the strong bond she had with her former mammy Demetrie. Thinking back of her childhood and the situation in the South, she realized the hardship black people had to endure and attempted to overcome her white ignorance. Thus, with her book, she wanted to raise awareness and sensitize her readers to racial discrimination. One can argue that she was successful, at least with regards to her white audience. Many black readers, in contrast, feel offended and are concerned with the novel's representation of black life. Stockett explains that she processed her own experiences and used them for the creation of her characters. Although she denies it, a close observation shows that Skeeter represents Stockett herself, as both women share numerous characteristics as well as a similar story. Also Skeeter's relationship with Constantine has resemblance to Stockett's own mammy Demetrie. Additionally, both women show an exploitative behavior in their dealings with black maids.

On the one hand, in the novel, Skeeter uses the black maid's knowledge and memories for her job at the local newspaper as well as the publication of her book. On the other hand, in real life, Stockett did the same. As the comparison demonstrates, she copied her brother's maid, Ablene Cooper, and created the character of Aibileen. In addition, Stockett is accused of defending the white characters by presenting them in a good light and using stereotypes for the black characters, such as the devoted mammy figure or the abusive black husband. By conducting a careful analysis of the main characters, it can be concluded that Aibileen, Minny, and Constantine carry some features of the stereotypical mammy figure, especially with respect to their appearance and knowledge regarding childcare and cooking. Nevertheless, it is not true that they prefer the white children they take care of to their own. They have a close relationship with their white charges, but do not love them more than their biological children. Therefore, when interpreting the novel, it is essential to keep in mind that the black mammy is a fictional figure created by white authors.

Concerning the portrayal of the black male characters, it can be said that they are often depicted as violent and uncaring, especially in contrast to the white husbands. Yet, there are also references to several acts of cruelties committed by white characters, especially concerning racial segregation. Moreover, the narrow mindedness of the white housewives, Hilly and Elizabeth in particular, as well as their harsh way of treating their children stands in contrast to the affection and patience of Aibileen and the other mammies and emphasizes their will power. Furthermore, although the relationship between the white employer and her help is shaped by interdependence, if the maid does something to the disapproval of the white lady, she will subtly exercise power over her and punish the maid as well as her family by ruining their lives. In order to analyze this behavior, it is important to take the concept of intersectionality into account.

White women are working against black women and not showing any gender solidarity. Therefore, the maids experience not only racial but also gender discrimination. This theory is reflected in the way the white housewives treat their colored maids. Elizabeth Leefolt and Hilly Holbrook, in particular, correspond to this concept and Hilly's Home Help Sanitation Initiative serves as the domestication of the Jim Crow laws. Nonetheless, Minny's relationship with Celia Foote serves as a counterargument and indicates that these connections cannot be generalized and a good rapport between black and white is possible despite racial segregation. Finally, critics claim that *The Help* is inaccurate and not historically reflective, but romanticizes past incidents.

Nevertheless, this is a reader-response problem, as critics perceive the book as a historical novel rather than fiction. Therefore, close reading and a careful analysis are essential in order to notice that the book is more complex than one might think at the first glance. Still, writing a novel about racism is a difficult balancing act between history and fiction and, as Howell Raines puts it,

“there is no trickier subject for a writer from the South than that of affection between a black person and a white one in the unequal world of segregation”.

Women in the study are representative of black women historically in the U.S. in that they were not housewives, but working women, mothers and wives - unlike white middle class women. The social construction of gender defined different roles for the white women and the black women in the study. The black women were domestic workers who worked for the middle class White housewife although they were educated, competent, and skilled enough to be assigned with educating and transporting the white children of their employers. The women worked in the low job classification of domestic worker because those were the only jobs available for most black women in the 1950's and 1960's.

In their workplace, they were further exploited because they were not only of the working class, but also because domestic work occurred in the private sphere of the homes and were therefore non-union and unprotected. The working experiences of black maids was therefore one of triple exploitation and discrimination due to race, class, and gender in the public sphere of society and in the private sphere of the homes of white middle class families where they were ill-treated, denigrated, and humiliated by white women. Interestingly, white women negotiated their gender identity through attempts of friendship with the black domestic workers but exercised their class and race privilege in the way they treated the black domestic workers. This resulted in complex and tense relationships of white superiority and black inferiority within gender.

The black maids in *The Help* not only negotiated their race, class and gender as oppressed working women, but also balanced their work life with their family life. They worked because their family depended on their income as the monies earned by their husbands could support the family. This is another example where the social construction of gender that defines the man as the breadwinner was not applicable to the black man and his family. The work that the women did however presented certain dilemmas as it required them to leave their own children to take care of white children as be away from their families overall for a great deal of time. While from the interviews this resulted in some anxiety with children and mothers, it did not cause conflict or family break-ups. Instead, most of the women reported strong relationships with their own children, spouses, their church and community.

This study is unique as it encompassed the full spectrum of the lives of Black maids. Like *The Help*, the findings, analysis and discussions are based on the true life stories of black domestic workers. It also provided the complexities and nuances of experiences, relationships

and perspectives when race, class, and gender intersect. The social activism, coping strategies, networking and sisterhood explained by the women could only be revealed by black domestic workers themselves including the places that this was possible such as at the bus stops and in the black churches. The data also serve to highlight the everyday forms of resistance by women in the workplace as well as in social movements that are sometimes not valued, even by the women themselves.

The contradictions start to emerge already from the beginning of the novel. On the one hand Stockett says that her intention with the book is to highlight the relationship between white and coloured people. On the other hand, already from page one she marks coloured people as not as good as whites, both through their language and the way they are addressed. Thereafter the patronizing attitude towards them just continues. Miss Skeeter is naive and constantly simplifies the relationship, although she is portrayed as the innocent well-meaning woman who wants to help. She does not understand the coloured people's struggle, and does not have the courage to confront her friends and take a stand against them. Moreover, the description of Minny exaggerates the feeling of "us and them". She is continuously portrayed as the other. In fact, it is only from Aibileen's point of view the relationship sometimes is described in a balanced way. However, the sequence when she compares herself with a cockroach is just one example out of many where Stockett stumbles in her narration.

To write a novel about the relationship between whites and coloured people is, as mentioned before, a heavy commitment. Critics have criticised Stockett for how she chose to write her story, however, people will always criticise. Independently of what an author writes about there are always those who have different opinions. It is important not to stop writing about racism, since it is important not to stop raising the race issue. I believe the constructions of

difference are one of the most vital parts to deal with, since it is the idea of people being different that threatens “the self”. It is important to see the different individuals that exist all over the world. It is here, according to me, that Stockett highlights the relationship between white and black people in an acceptable way. As a result her narrative becomes patronising. This is because she does not treat the black people as individuals, she treats them only, for example, as maids or as less educated people. Stockett also fails in describing the racial issue, since she takes away the terror and only focuses on the relationship between maids and their employers. Admittedly, it is a work of fiction, the story was more authentic, since it deals with such a heavy subject. I still think the book is good and I think that Stockett does something that is really important and valuable, since her novel provokes reactions and discussions. I believe that it is necessary to discuss subjects such as racism and oppression, and that it becomes dangerous when people stop doing it. However, as I have argued, it is essential to talk about the different constructions that can emerge, which might in itself raise awareness.

Kathryn Stockett’s debut novel *The Help* is the result of racial discrimination, democracy and equality. This novel is the debut novel to Kathryn Stockett, who was born in 1969 at Jackson, Mississippi, United States, an American writer. The story of how African-American maids in the South viewed their employers during Jim Crow days, it is equally the story of how they empowered a young white woman. It deals with pain but more often for reassurance. Racism is vile and cruel, but not all white people are bad. Strict racial segregation laws known as “Jim Crow laws” (1965) that made African Americans second-class citizens. Although the slavery ends but the people who were in the South didn’t get their freedom. *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett shows racial segregation and inequality toward Afro-American community.

The Help is an exploration of the ways in which racism pervaded every aspect of social life in 1960s Jackson, Mississippi – from Jim Crow laws that sanctioned discrimination and segregation as official policy to casual conversations between middle-class white women. In particular, the novel focuses on how white housewives justified the exploitation and emotional abuse of their black maids by convincing themselves that black people are fundamentally different from – and inferior to – white people. The novel investigates and portrays how racism is not inherent to human nature, but is instead passed down generation to generation by way of education. *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett shows the peak of racial segregation.

Kathryn Stockett manages to merge fact and fiction perfectly, exploring different emotions ranging from sadness to happiness sometimes all in the same paragraph. Stockett has not only written an unforgettable, at times humorous and all-round brilliant story; this is also an informative masterpiece, educating people about life of the help in the segregated society of Jackson, Mississippi in the early 1960s, using some of her personal experiences of growing up in the deep south. *The Help* makes people aware of the problem of white supremacy and the damaging consequences of racist behaviour towards the Blacks.

The Help contributed a lot to changing white Americans' perception of African Americans. The novel as well as the film of the same title based on Stockett's book serve as an eye-opener to racially prejudiced white Americans helping them discern huge number of problems dealt with by the Blacks which were largely ignored or glossed over by the Whites over the centuries. *The Help* had great influence on all its readers and immediately opened their eyes on the obstacles the Blacks face every day.

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Redefining Motherhood within Discursive Spaces: Emma

Donoghue's *Room*

A project submitted to

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2021

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

PREFACE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CHAPTER NO.	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Struggle's of Ma	11
Three	Motherhood: A Female Bonding	22
Four	Facts and Arts: A Stylistic Analysis	32
Five	Summation	43
	Works Cited	51

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Redefining Motherhood within Discursive Spaces : A Study of Emma Donoghue's *Room*** a novel submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Maria Anbu Reshma .V during the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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PRINCIPAL

PREFACE

Emma Donoghue is an Irish-Canadian playwright, literary historian, novelist, and screenwriter. In her novel *Room* she presents how Ma establishes resistance and achieves redemption in motherhood . In its portrayal of motherhood as both resistant and redemptive, *Room* offers a necessary challenge and corrective to normative motherhood.

The first chapter Introduction deals with a short biography of Emma Donoghue, discussing the general characteristics of her works. It also gives an introduction about Irish literature and its background.

The second chapter Struggles of Ma highlights the struggle experienced by Ma, as the chief female character and reveals the significant meaning of Ma's struggle.

The third chapter Motherhood : A Female Bonding deals with the theme of Motherhood and the problems faced by Ma as a mother in this patriarchal society. Out of all the sufferings she proves herself to be the best mother.

The forth chapter Facts and Arts : A Stylistic Analysis portrays the setting and the stylistic features of the novel and the linguistic mastery of the novelist.

The fifth chapter Summation sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters.

The researcher has consistently referred to and resorted to the guidelines prescribes by MLA Handbook 8th Edition for the preparation of the thesis.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Redefining Motherhood within Discursive Spaces : A Study of** Emma Donoghue's *Room* submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

April 2021

Thoothukudi

Maria Anbu Reshma V.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Irish literature is the oldest vernacular literature in Western Europe. Irish is a member of the Celtic language family, along with Scottish Gaelic, Manx, Welsh, Cornish, and Breton. Many current Irish place names and surnames come from the original Irish names. The oldest Irish literary text, *Amra Choluim Chille* dates back to 597 AD. The Irish language evolved, becoming more simplified and standardized, but also being influenced by foreign languages spoken by invaders. Irish remained the language of the majority in Ireland until the 19th century when it went into a rapid decline, and was eventually replaced by English. The death of million people, almost all Irish speakers during the Great Famine was a major factor in the decline of the language. In addition, the British government passed laws introducing English into schools and prohibiting the teaching of Irish.

Irish writing is, despite its unique national and linguistic characteristics, inevitably intertwined with English literature, and this relationship has led frequently to the absorption of Irish writers and texts into the canon of English literature. Many of the best known Irish authors lived and worked for long periods in exile, often in England, and this too has contributed to a sense of instability in the development of a canon defined as uniquely Irish. Key Irish writers, from Edmund Burke and Jonathan Swift to Oliver Goldsmith, Maria Edgeworth, Oscar Wilde, and George Bernard Shaw, were traditionally considered English authors.

Edmund Burke was an Irish statesman and philosopher. He spent most of his active life in English politics, and died the political oracle of conservative Europe.

His view on society was hierarchical and authoritarian, yet one of his noblest characteristics was his repeated defense of those who were too weak to defend themselves. His career as a practical politician was a failure, his political theories found favor only with posterity. In 1756 Burke published two philosophical treatises, *A Vindication of Natural Society* and *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. In the *Vindication* Burke exposed the futility of demanding a reason for moral and social institutions and with the foresight which was one of the most remarkable of his gifts, distinguished the coming attack of rationalistic criticism on the established order.

The *Enquiry* was considered by Samuel Johnson to be “an example of true criticism.” These works were followed in 1757 by *An Account of the European Settlement in America*, to which Burke, although he denied authorship, clearly contributed a great deal. The early sheets of *The Abridgement of the History of England* were also printed in 1757, although the book itself was not published until after Burke’s death. These works introduced Burke’s name into London literary circles and seemed to open up a reputable career.

Anglo-Irish poet, satirist, essayist, and political pamphleteer Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin, Ireland. He spent much of his early adult life in England before returning to Dublin to serve as Dean of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin for the last 30 years of his life. It was this later stage when he would write most of his greatest works. Best known as the author of *A Modest Proposal* published in 1729, *Gulliver’s Travels* in 1726, and *A Tale of a Tub* in 1704, In his most recognized novel, *Gulliver’s Travel*, Swift presents a satire on all aspects of humanity by pointing out the

weaknesses, vices, and follies inherent in all human beings. Swift is widely acknowledged as the greatest prose satirist in the history of English literature.

Oliver Goldsmith, one of the most popular 18th century English writers, lived a fascinating life of contradictions, between his unquestionable brilliance and self-destructive tendencies. Goldsmith traveled for many years, until settling in London in 1756. It was here that he finally turned to literature, and his career took off. Though he made a lucrative living through writing history books and literary journals, Goldsmith also lived a free-wheeling life of gambling and generous extravagance that kept him in debt. Amongst his literary output in this period are contributions to Tobias Smollett's *Critical Review*, and *An Inquiry to the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* published in 1759. His writing also appeared in *The Busy Body*, *The British Magazine*, and *The Lady's Magazine*. A year later, his "Chinese letters" were published in the *Public Ledger*; these were fictionalized letters in the style of Voltaire that presumed to be written by a Chinese mandarin visiting England. Goldsmith first master work was the novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*. This novel, along with his masterful comic play *She Stoops to Conquer*, found great success, and remain his best loved works.

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was an Irish poet and playwright. After writing in different forms throughout the 1880s, the early 1890s saw him become one of the most popular playwrights in London. In the final decade of his life, Wilde wrote and published nearly all of his major work. In his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* Wilde combined the supernatural elements of the Gothic novel with the unspeakable sins of French decadent fiction. Critics charged immorality despite Dorian's self-destruction. Wilde insisted on the amoral nature of art regardless of an apparently moral ending. *Intentions* published in 1891, consisting of previously

published essays, restated his aesthetic attitude toward art by borrowing ideas from the French poets Théophile Gautier and Charles Baudelaire and the American painter James McNeill Whistler. In the same year, two volumes of stories and fairy tales also appeared, testifying to his extraordinary creative inventiveness: *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime, and Other Stories* and *A House of Pomegranates*.

Wilde's greatest successes were his society comedies. He employed his paradoxical, epigrammatic wit to create a form of comedy new to the 19th-century English theatre. His first success *Lady Windermere's Fan*, demonstrated that this wit could revitalize the rusty machinery of French drama.

George Bernard Shaw born in Dublin, Ireland was an Irish comic dramatist, literary critic, and socialist propagandist, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925. He began his literary career as a novelist; as a fervent advocate of the new theatre of Ibsen. He decided to write plays in order to illustrate his criticism of the English stage. His earliest dramas were called appropriately *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* published in 1898. Among these, *Widower's Houses* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* savagely attack social hypocrisy, while in plays such as *Arms and the Man* and *The Man of Destiny* the criticism is less fierce.

Other important plays by Shaw are *Caesar and Cleopatra* in 1901, a historical play filled with allusions to modern times, and *Androcles and the Lion* in 1912, in which he exercised a kind of retrospective history and from modern movements drew deductions for the Christian era. In *Major Barbara* in 1905, one of Shaw's most successful plays, the audience's attention is held by the power of the witty argumentation that man can achieve aesthetic salvation only through political activity, not as an individual. *The Doctor's Dilemma* published in 1906, facetiously classified as a tragedy by Shaw, is really a comedy the humour of which is directed at the

medical profession. *Candida* in 1898, with social attitudes toward sex relations as objects of his satire, and *Pygmalion* in 1912, a witty study of phonetics as well as a clever treatment of middle-class morality and class distinction, proved some of Shaw's greatest successes on the stage. It is a combination of the dramatic, the comic, and the social corrective that gives Shaw's comedies their special flavour. Shaw's complete works appeared in thirty-six volumes between 1930 and 1950, the year of his death.

Emma Donoghue, 21st century Irish-Canadian writer, was born in Dublin, Ireland, October 1969. She has seven siblings and she is the youngest. She began to write when she was twenty three and started to make an income from writing. In 1997, she got her Ph.D. from University of Cambridge with her research of friendship between men and woman in eighteenth-century English fiction. Donoghue was later moving from England, Ireland, and Canada, but then she decided to settle in London, Ontario with her partner Christine Roulston, her son Finn and her daughter Una.

According to an FAQ published on her website, Donoghue reveals her reason why she decided to stay in Canada. It is because "love of a Canadian" who refers to her partner, Chris. Donoghue is also a literary historian. Donoghue's first published book is telling about woman and lesbian entitled *Passions between Women: British Lesbian Culture 1668-1801*. It was first published in the United Kingdom in 1996 then followed by its publication in the US. In 2011, she also won National Lesbian and Gay Federation Person of the Year Award. Donoghue also writes both stage and radio drama. Her first five works of theater are published by Oberon Books entitled *Emma Donoghue: Selected Plays*.

Donoghue's first novel was 1994's *Stir Fry*, a contemporary coming of age novel about a young Irish woman discovering her sexuality. It was a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award in 1994. This was followed in 1995 by *Hood*, another contemporary story, about an Irish woman coming to terms with the death of her girlfriend. *Hood* won the 1997 American Library Association's Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Book Award for Literature. *Slammerkin* is a historical novel set in London and Wales. Inspired by an 18th century newspaper story about a young servant who killed her employer and was executed, the protagonist is a prostitute who longs for fine clothes. It was a finalist in the 2001 Irish Literature Prize for Fiction and was awarded the 2002 Ferro-Grumley Award for Lesbian Fiction. Her novel, *Landing* published in 2002, portrays a long-distance relationship between a Canadian curator and an Irish flight attendant. *The Sealed Letter* (2008), another work of historical fiction, is based on the Codrington Affair, a scandalous divorce case that gripped Britain in 1864. The protagonist is Emily Faithfull. *The Sealed Letter* was longlisted for the Giller Prize, and was joint winner, with Chandra Mayor's *All the Pretty Girls*, of the 2009 Lambda Literary Award for Lesbian Fiction.

On 27 July 2010, Donoghue's novel *Room* was long listed for the Man Booker Prize and on 7 September 2010 it made the shortlist. On 2nd November 2010, it was announced that *Room* had been awarded the Rogers Writers Trust Fiction Prize. *Room* was also shortlisted for the 2010 Governor General's Awards in Canada, and was the winner of the Irish Book Award 2010. It was short-listed for the Orange Prize for Fiction 2011. She later wrote the screenplay for a film version of the book, *Room* 2015, for which she was nominated for an Academy Award, Golden Globe and Bafta Award, and in 2017 adapted it into a play performed at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin.

Her novel *Frog Music*, a historical fiction based on the true story of a murdered 19th-century cross-dressing frog catcher, was published in 2014. *The Wonder*, published in 2016, was shortlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize. *The Pull of the Stars* 2020, was published earlier than originally planned because it was set in the 1918 influenza pandemic in Dublin, Ireland. All the characters were fictional except Dr. Kathleen Lynn. The novel received strongly positive reviews from critics and was long listed for the Giller Prize in 2020.

Donoghue writes so many genres, but she is best known for as fiction writer. *Room* has become her first novel that made into a movie. The movie version of *Room* is nominated for The Best Movie in Academy Award in 2016, and the leading actress plays as Ma, Brie Larson, is the winner of Best Actress Academy Award. She says that *Room* is inspired by the Fritzl family in Austria who escape from a dungeon. *Room*, which is a locked room, is also part of the metaphor for the claustrophobic.

The first edition of the novel *Room* was published in 2010 by Picador. The writer English version of the novel that published by Little, Brown Company. Donoghue reveals that *Room* is a “metaphor for the claustrophobic and a tender bond of parenthood”. Besides, using Rapunzel as an example, Donoghue states that *Room* is also inspired by “ancient folk motifs of walled-up virgins who give birth”. *Room* itself is divided into five chapters: Presents, Unlying, Dying, After, and Living.

Room is an eleven by eleven foot place where Ma and Jack are being locked for years. It is the first place where Ma, as the female protagonist character, experiences multiple assaults for the first time. She is only nineteen when she comes to the room. A man called Old Nick kidnapped her and forced her to fulfill his desire. In the first period of her imprisonment in Room, she is nearly getting insane because she cannot escape from room. Old Nick has made the room as a soundproof cell with

fence on every side. The younger Ma tries many ways to escape, yet she failed in every way. In room, she raises her only child, Jack, with the best care. Jack is Ma's second child. Ma once gave birth to a baby girl but she died. It becomes one of the reasons why Ma is overprotective to Jack. She does not let Old Nick meet Jack and she will shut Jack in the Wardrobe every night when Old Nick comes to Room.

After Jack's fifth birthday, Ma begins to think about escaping again. She discovers that Old Nick is in a foreclosure, it means that sooner or later Old Nick will abandon them in Room forever. Ma makes Jack "deathly ill" with diarrhea to deceive Old Nick. The great escape is yet to come: making Jack die, laying him on Rug, and Old Nick will bring him outside. It is hard to make Jack believe about the great escape, but Ma has her own way to make Jack strong enough to do it.

After successfully coming out from Room with, Ma and Jack are going to Cumberland Clinic for having a care, it is a mental health hospital. Ma thinks that she can be free from oppression in room, in facts she meets the doctor and the nurse that control her every day. She begins to refuse everything she does not accustom to, including the nurse dolling up her medications. She denies about her son's and her own condition that they are not sick.

The conflict arises when Ma and Jack discover that they are being famous. They cannot go outside because paparazzi are waiting outside the building. Later on, Ma discovers that her parents are divorced, her mother is having a new husband and her father has moved to Australia. In the beginning, Ma does not have a problem dealing with her mother's new husband and she is perfectly fine with her mother's new life. On the contrary, her father is a little bit shocked to find out that Ma is alive with her child. He cannot accept the fact that his daughter has come back with a son. From this point, Ma feels that her society will not support her and has denied her.

The climax arises when Ma faces the interviewer from a TV. The main reason why she wants to go to interview is that she wants to raise Jack's college fund. Dr. Clay as her doctor and Morris as her lawyer push her to go to the interview. Ma often gets mad at the interviewer's questions. Suddenly, in one of the sessions, Ma says to the interviewer that she has become a stepford wife in room. At the end of the interview Ma was crying. The next day, she was depressed and tries to commit suicide.

For the first time, Ma and Jack are separated. Ma stays longer in Cumberland Clinic to have an intensive care, while Jack is going home with his Grandma. In the Clinic, Ma heals herself away from other people who often hurt her with the help of Dr. Clay and Noreen. She gets a special treatment for weeks so she can go back to her son later. Jack, who never separated from his Ma, tries to learn how to live in his own body with the help of Grandma.

Coming back from Cumberland Clinic, Ma decided to live independently in Independent Living with Jack. She wants to start a new better life and take her pain away. In the end, Jack wants to see Room once again to say goodbye. She agrees with Jack's idea and calls the police to accompany her to go to Room. Jack makes her realize that she should visit Room once again and deal with her past.

In the novel Emma Donoghue brings out the extreme pain of a woman. Ma has fought against defeat and denigration, against the dying of light. She has urged herself to rise above even in the most difficult situation, in order to see the positive side of life. The second chapter deals with the traumatic experience of Ma and how she establishes a new independent life for her and her son.

Chapter Two

Struggle's of Ma

Trauma is an extraordinary stressful event which attacks the security sense. It makes a person defenseless in a dangerous environment. Betrayal, verbal abuse, sexual abuse or any serious loss are some of the cause of trauma. It affects the psychology of the person and makes it difficult to move out of the situation. In his *Coping With Trauma*, G. John Allen says: "Traumatic Experience is a condition where individual or group of people have experience with fears, terrors, helplessness which the result of conflict, rape, physical and sexual violence, kidnapping, natural disasters and others" (11).

In her novel *Room*, the character Ma has suffered creepy moment on her past. Ma has to live in a narrow world and she is not allowed to go outside. Every night she has to sleep with a man who was the cause of her misery. This chapter identifies what abusive treatment Ma has undergone in life and how she struggles in those situations. It brings out the traumatic feeling that happened in the room.

Ma is an intelligent and caring woman, she is also portrayed to be tough. This was based on her surrounding, decisions and actions. Speech is another way to analyze the characteristics of Ma. For example, Ma has lost her first child before she gives birth to Jack. She gave birth alone under poor conditions to a healthy baby. It was the most difficult thing to do for Ma being locked in the room.

"He was right there, watching." Ma's nearly shouting. "He didn't know the first thing about babies getting born, he hadn't even bothered to Google it. I could feel the top of her head, it was all slippery, I pushed and pushed, I was shouting, 'Help, I can't, help me- 'And he just stood there." (*Room* 255. All

quotation from the text will be cited hereafter with the page numbers)

Ma's strongest action is when she pulls the baby out by herself. She tries to bring the baby safely into the world, the man who kidnapped her, just stood and does not help her. Unfortunately, the baby is dead, it was blue. Losing her first child was the hardest point in her life.

Ma becomes brave the day after she gives birth to her first child. She kicks and screams to the man who has kidnapped her, without thinking what will happen to her. Ma feels that it was not fair and she asks for justice. She really hates the man and decides not to talk with him "I kicked and screamed. One time I hit him over the head with the lid of the toilet. I didn't wash, for a long time I wouldn't speak."

"I hated him." (290)

Ma is also persistent when she states that, she had an abortion at the age of eighteen. While an abortion is considered to be a shameful action and women are labeled as sinners, she never regrets what happened to her in the past. After two years, Ma gives birth to her second children Jack, he is successfully delivered to the earth.

"I can't speak for anyone else. Like, I had an abortion when I was eighteen, and I've never regretted that."

Jack was everything. I was alive again, I mattered. So, after that I was polite." (291)

Ma's life is cheerful than before because of the presence of Jack. Ma wants Jack to be with her from the day he was born and as the source of happiness, Jack brings Ma alive again, she finally has someone to talk to every day, not feeling lonely. Ma also promises to change her life in order to give her son bright future even though they live in room.

When Ma and Jack escapes from the room, there are other obstacle Ma faces, and it is her own family. Situations has changed since Ma has left her house, her parents are divorced, although Ma is shocked at these situations, she still encourages herself to face the family.

“Dad will get his act together in a while,” “What's his act?”.

“I mean he’ll behave better. More like a real grandpa.” Like Steppa, only he’s not a real one. (284)

When Ma’s biological father comes home, he was surprised to see Jack and seems not to welcome him. Ma convinces herself that this was because her father is tired and it will be a different situation if he is in a great mood. Ma persuades Jack that her father will accept Jack as his grandson.

Another obstacle is when Ma and Jack meets the society. Society judges Jack as an abnormal kid, it was because he lives differently from other people, and they label Jack to be a freak and idiot kid. Ma is annoyed with those words as it may affect Jack’s growth. In the room, she can control everything and she finds it to be a little bit easier because she has power in that room.

When our world was eleven foot square it was easier to control.

Lots of things are freaking Jack out right now.

But I hate the way the media call him a freak, or an idiot savant, or feral, that word.” (295)

Ma wants to prove the society that Jack was normal just like other children. Ma does not think this to be a serious issue, she just focuses to educate Jack with new environment that he has never faced before. The bigger living space is not an easy thing to control, it needs mental strength. It is not easy to be a person like Ma,

she has gone through enough of ups and downs in life.

Ma was kidnapped when she was nineteen years old and was locked up for almost seven years. Her life changes drastically. She lives in a room and her life becomes miserable. The only person she talks to every day is the man who kidnapped her and visited the room in specific time. Here, Ma's psychology changes, leading her to great depression and fear. The man takes control over Ma's life. This type of trauma that happened to Ma is psychological violence

Mental, emotional and verbal traumas are included in the part of psychological violence. In Emma Donoghue's *Room*, it is stated that Ma faced new conditions that she had never imagined before. The day she was kidnapped, she was just an innocent girl who is unaware of a stranger's intention. Ma easily believes what Old Nick says and check the condition of the dog in a hasty manner. The man uses the dog as an object to attract Ma's attention and her feeling.

Anyway--this man ran up asking for help, his dog was having a fit and he thought it might be dying."

"What's he called?"

"The man?"

I shake my head. "The dog."

"No, the dog was just a trick to get me into his pickup truck, Old Nick's truck." (116-117)

Ma explains her son about the reason she was trapped in the room. It can be seen that Ma has her own interest to help the dog, but by trusting the man whom she has never met makes her life miserable. Ma easily trusts the stranger and unfortunately she falls into a trap and gets locked in the room for almost two years with no one. The man only comes to provide her with foods, vitamins, and some

clothes. Yeah, but see, why I was sad--it was *because* of Room,” says Ma. “Old Nick--I didn't even know him, I was nineteen. He stole me. “I’m trying to understand.” (116)

Ma tries to escape before the man takes her into an unknown place, but her efforts were useless. The room was fortified with security system code and only the man who knows the password was the one who supplies foods and vitamins for Ma. Although Ma gets all of the daily needs, she is still depressed because there is no other person to talk with.

In this condition, Ma has little power to oppose the man, depression and stress has filled her mind. She tries to accept what has happened without complaining. A year has passed, and Ma still does not want to see the face of the man nor have any interaction with him. Her only desire was to escape the room. Ma was haunted with nightmares and fears for few months until she accepts her new condition. At the same time deep inside her heart, she really wants to escape that condition.

Ma was kidnapped for seven years and this led her into emotional and mental shock for a very long period. She has to deal with her present condition and learns the man’s pattern to find a way to escape the room. After the birth of Jack she promises to keep him safe from Old Nick.

“Get away, get away from him!”

“I can be quiet,” she says, she’s nearly whispering, I hear her breath all scratchy. “You know how quiet I can be, so long as you leave him alone. It’s all I’ve ever asked.” (92)

Once Ma was emotionally shaken when Jack was curious with Old Nick's face, and spontaneously Old Nick greets him with "Hey, Sonny!". This makes Ma overwhelmed with fear because she does not want Old Nick see or even put a hand on Jack. She screams and makes Old Nick angry. The next day she receives her punishment from Old Nick, he cuts the electricity.

In this novel, Ma not only gets psychologically abused, but also sexually. She has been forced to have sex with him every day. She does not have the power to fight the man until she has a son. Though she has one, she is still being forced to do it. "I don't think he came last night after nine, the air's always different if he came. I don't ask because she doesn't like saying about him" (4).

Ma is engaged with a totally different situation. She has to obey the man because it is the only way for her to survive. Even though she has a companion to talk with, her psychological condition did not change. She cannot defend herself and obey the man's request.

When Old Nick creaks Bed, I listen and count fives on my fingers, tonight it's 217 creaks. I always have to count till he makes that gaspy sound and stops. I don't know what would happen if I didn't count, because I always do. (46)

Old Nick only comes to Ma at 9.00 p.m. every night. When he comes, Jack sleeps in the wardrobe and sometimes Jack heard the creaking sound. Ma cannot refuse Old Nick's demand because it has become a habit. This shows that Ma always obeys and gives herself to the man rather than putting herself at risk.

Ma and him only talk for a bit tonight. Lamp goes off click and Old Nick
creaks the bed.

I count in ones sometimes instead of fives just for different. But I start losing count so I switch to fives that go faster, I count to 378. (26)

The impact of abuse that happened to Ma influenced her psychological problems and put her life into some reactions. First among them was the feeling of fear.

“I used to be scared to go to sleep, in case he came back,” says Ma, “but when I was asleep was the only time I wasn’t crying, so I slept about sixteen hours a day.” (118)

Ma’s mind and body quickly gives response to the condition that happened to her. She spent about sixteen hours a day sleeping, because she just scared to see the person who kidnapped her come back and does something inappropriate to her. As known, sleeping is the time for people to relax and refresh the mind. Ma does the same thing because when she is asleep, she cannot see the man who kidnapped her and thus feels safe. She keeps repeating this for almost few months after her arrival in room.

Secondly the feelings of helplessness and fear. Ma’s anger to her condition grows bigger and thus finds a way to get out from the room. Everything she does to escape seems to worsen her condition which she never really wished for. Once she took the toilet lid and threw it up onto the man’s head but it fails. Ma tries to escape the room not only once or twice, but repetitively. This leads to the condition of helplessness. It is caused by the situation she faces and the belief that everything she tries becomes inconclusive and there is no way out from this situation including her own self. Mursyidah in her journal states that

It is clear that Ma herself suffers the anxiety which disturb her psychological condition. Therefore, between the id, ego, and superego

and the anxiety concepts can't be untied from each other's. They have strong relationship in building human being's behavior. (6)

She wants everything that happened to her to end soon. But what happens is different from what she wanted, and it was not easy for her to overcome it. If she does not find a way out then everything she did means nothing. She starts to accept her new condition in order to survive.

Years have passed and Jack as a grown up boy asks whether there is a world outside. Ma tells him that there is a life outside the room and there are other human outside there. But Jack was not able to accept it, he believes that there is no life outside and the people who live together with Ma and Jack are aliens. Ma is dissatisfied with Jack's belief

She takes her hand away. "No, sorry. Lots of TV is made-up pictures--like, Dora's just a drawing--but the other people, the ones with faces that look like you and me, they're real."

"Actual humans?"

She nods. "And the places are real too, like farms and forests and airplanes and cities . . ." (73)

The journey of Ma and Jack does not end there. Escaping the room does not make their life happy. Ma has to face the society and her family. When they escaped, Ma and Jack were sent to public rehabilitation. Ma thinks that neither Jack nor she needs rehabilitation because Ma always kept Jack safe in the room.

Jack doesn't need *treatment*, he needs some sleep. "Ma's talking through her teeth. "He's never been out of my sight and nothing happened to him, nothing like what you're insinuating. (207)

Ma believes that Jack does not need treatment. He only needs some rest to ease his

mind and self after escaping the room. Ma does not want anyone to touch or even take Jack away from her sight. She feels that the only safe place for Jack is with Ma and vice versa.

Society keeps asking both Ma and Jack on how they survive and their life in the room. Ma has been asked for interview for several times but she refuses because she does not want to remember what had happened in the room. One day, she encourages herself to tell her life story to the people outside.

This is the first time Ma has been interviewed. The reporter asks how she spent her life in the room and whether she hated her captor or not. The conversation between Ma and the reporter goes deep until Ma shouts to stop asking such questions. Ma feels intimidated by the reporter because she goes too far and some of her questions are inappropriate.

All this reverential--I'm not a saint." Ma's voice is getting loud again.

"I wish people would stop treating us like we're the only ones who ever lived through something terrible. I've been finding stuff on the Internet you wouldn't believe."(294)

Ma does not want her life to be exposed too much by the television. Ma is not totally cured from the traumatic experience that happened to her for almost seven years. The more people questions her condition, the more stressful she becomes. Ma receives mental pressures from society, doctor, and her family. Amela Puljek-Shank says "A traumatic experience is like a picture of volcanic eruption" (183).

The more the pressure the more will be the eruption. This was the state of Ma, she held on her pressure for a long time until she becomes suicidal to make her safe and end all her suffering. She gives up everything and thinks that suicide is the only way out.

I don't know what's--Then I see Ma's pill bottles open on the table, they look mostly empty. Never more than two, that's the rule, how could they be mostly empty, where did the pills go? Noreen's pressing on the side of Ma's throat and saying her other name and "Can you hear me? (312)

Ma thinks when someone is in deep pressure and stress, the only way to end their journey is to commit suicide. The environment which Ma lived in gives an impact to Ma. They keep blaming the way Ma educate Jack and everything she did was wrong. She is sent to a rehabilitation center. This is the last step to heal her from her traumatic condition. It is only a matter of time, support and safe environment to get things back to normal.

Ma tries to recover from her traumatic experience.

"As soon as she possibly can," he says. "Would you feel more comfortable staying at the clinic instead of here at your Grandma's?"

"With Ma in Room Number Seven?"

He shakes his head. "She's in the other wing, she needs to be on her own for a while."

I think he's wrong, if I was sick I'd need Ma with me even more.

"But she's working really hard to get better," he tells me. (342)

Ma does not need the therapy from the clinic anymore. She wants to focus on her new life. She wants to educate her son with different situation and tools that they never used before in the room. Now they can do all that in their apartment, where they cannot be disturbed.

Jack asks Ma to see the room for the last time. At first Ma refuses because it is not important anymore. But Jack keeps asking and finally Ma took Jack to see the

room which had been their house for almost seven years. Ma takes Jack to the room not only because of his wish, but also she wants to feel that she was out of her traumatic condition. So visiting the room once again was not going to affect her life in any way.

Though Ma experiences all those sufferings, she never failed in her duty as a mother. Thus the upcoming chapter deals with the theme of motherhood.

Chapter Three

Motherhood: A Female Bonding

Room, through the enslaved victim's voice portrays series of common incidents like multiple disrobement, forced women confinement, silent abduction, violent pregnancy, and sexual assaults at a smaller scale, and motherhood at a larger scale. In true sense the novel portrays the best story about the bond between a child and a mother. It represents the hardships and the resilience obtained to combat those hardships, as stated by Emma Donoghue in one of the interviews, when asked about the Ma and Jack relationship,

Yes, *Room* celebrates the mother's love but painfully calculates those moments when Ma has to recognize that Jack needs something other than her protection. Those moments all parents come to when love takes the form of stepping back, letting go.

Generally, motherhood is defined as the kinship between the mother and the child. The unconscious action of feeding the fetus in the womb for nine months through placenta is undoubtedly natural, which makes the child an extension of the mother. Likewise *Room*, exultantly celebrates this bond, where mother as a single parent nurtures the child with all the possible resources she has.

This chapter sheds light on how Ma, the female character in Emma Donoghue's *Room* negotiates her roles as a mother of a five years old Jack while living inside a constraining room built by Old Nick and how Ma as a young girl led her life before being kidnapped. It particularly focuses on how Ma attempts to redefine her motherhood within built and discursive spaces that Nick constructs. Nick also partly constructs the discursive space within the room. Ma successfully performs her sense of motherhood such as providing him physical needs like nutritious food

and nurturing his cognitive development. Ma had a pleasant life before she was locked in the room.

I was a student. It was early in the morning, I was crossing a parking lot to get to the college library, listening to- it's a tiny machine that hold a thousand songs and plays them in your ear, I was the first of my friends to get one. (116)

Ma comes from a family that is prosperous enough to finance her education. Ma's life is just like that of the common people. Ma's statement about being the first of her friends to have that tiny machine explains that Ma comes from a wealthy family.

Ma also comes from a well-endowed family. She knows what hammock is, and how to draw. She is able to give explanation to her son on what hammock looks like by drawing it on paper. She also gains a lot of facilities when she was living with her family. She spends time by playing with her brother, Paul and also her parents. Her parents always make her happy, and never stop to give attention for their child's growth. Ma states herself as her parents little girl.

"What's a hammock?" Ma gets pencil from Shelf and does a drawing of two trees, there's ropes between them all knotted together with a person lying on the ropes.

"Is that a pirate?"

"That's me, swinging in the hammock." She does the paper side by side, she's all excited. "And I used to go to the playground with Paul and swing on the swings as well, and eat ice cream. Your grandma and grandpa took us on trips in the car, to the zoo and to the beach. I was their little girl." (104)

Another example showing that Ma comes from a well-endowed family is the part when she operates the computer and opens the old picture of her friends. She could open the site which connects each people in the world to see her friends one by one.

“That just means I knew them a long time ago. They look so different.

“She puts her eyes nearer the pictures, she mutters things like “South Korea” or “Divorced already, no way-

“There's another new website she finds with videos of songs and things, she shows me two cats dancing in ballet shoes that's funny.

Then she goes to other sites with only words like confinement and trafficking, she says can I let her read for a while, so I try my Dora game again and this time I win a Switchy Star. (274)

Ma gave an answer to Jack's question one by one and she was willing to tell Jack what her friends looked like. She even knew where her former friends lived and opened the information through the websites. Ma tried to show Jack another funny video which was proper to watch for five years old kid. Emma Donoghue describes Ma as someone who comes from a worth living family in order to share her childhood experience with her son. This is a proof that Ma wants Jack also to enjoy the same facilities and freedom once they escape the room.

Inside the room, Jack is Ma's life. She spends every moment with him, educating him, feeding him, playing with him. She still breastfeeds him, which is normal within the room because in the room they only belong to each other. No rules or categories to be fitted as right or wrong. Unlike Jack, Ma wants to return to the outside world. Jack does not know anything besides the room. Jack divides the world into two areas of realms. There is Room, as Jack calls it because he can name things

inside the room into characters as he please and his mother teaches him how to. “In Room we knowed what everything was called but in the world there’s so much, persons don’t even know the names” (333).

For Jack, room is a place of such warmth, fun, intimacy, and routine. For Ma, it’s a very different story. The first one for a mother is to protect and preserve their children, which means to fulfill their body needs to keep on living. A mother has to provide milk and nutritious food for her child. Keeping a child healthy is not only giving food but also to make their body fit through exercise.

I can smell Ma beside me, I’ve got the best nose in the family. “Oh, I forgot to have some when I woke up.” “That’s OK. Maybe we could skip it once in a while, now you’re five?” “No way Jose.” So she lies down on the white of Duvet and me too and I have lots. (7)

Jack is still breastfeeding even though he is five years old. When Jack woke up he was lying next to Ma and asks for the milk. Normally a mother stops breastfeeding when the child is two years old. In Ma’s situation, she only wants the best nutrition for her son Jack so that he will not get sick easily. Therefore, the best she can do is giving him the best medicine and nutrition, her breast milk. This has made Jack healthy and that’s why Ma still continues giving him even after they have escaped the room.

The second demand of motherhood is to nurture the children’s emotional and intellectual growth. It is a mother’s responsibility to teach their children how to speak, how to solve the problem and support them with basic knowledge. Usually children start attending school when they are around three or four years. However in Ma’s case, she is the only one to teach Jack all of that since they are locked in a

small room. Despite her captivity, she civilizes and humanizes Jack. In *Room*, Ma has her own ways to teach her son by sharing her knowledge to Jack.

She points up at Skylight. “You’ve just seen it when it’s full and right overhead. But when we get out, we’ll be able to spot it lower down in the sky, when it’s all kind of shapes. And even in the daytime.”

“No way Jose.”

“I’m telling you the truth. You’re going to enjoy the world so much. Wait till you see the sun when it’s going down, all pink and purple . . .”

(142)

Ma once lived outside the room and she believes that when Jack escapes the room he will be able to see everything. In the room, Jack only saw the sky, snow, and sun through a tiny square skylight on the roof. He does not know how beautiful the sun is and how attractive the color of sunrise is because he only sees partial of the whole part. This happened because he has limited access in the room. This shows Ma’s intelligence which states her knowledge and caring. She is capable in explaining what universe looks like to her son although it is difficult for her son to understand whether it is real or not. Ma’s impression towards the sunset is just like common people who take pleasure when the sky changes its colours. In that part, Ma wants her son to enjoy the world like she did during her childhood.

She passes on her cultural knowledge to him, from religion to tooth-brushing to rules. Throughout their five years of captivity, Ma commits to the preservation, nurturance, and training of Jack. As a mother, Ma has given her best to her son. She has kept Jack safe from Old Nick for five years. Ma teaches Jack how to read, write, play, and how to imagine through the storybooks he read. Ma schedules everything

for Jack in proper time like storytelling, exercises, eating, playing etc. She instructs him like an instructor, teach him like a teacher, and guide him like a friend.

Ma uses some techniques to educate her son living in the room. She educates her son to create toys from the packages of snacks and collection of their books. She wants Jack to have a proper childhood's life like every child who live outside the room. So that Jack can easily adapt with the real world when they escape from the room.

We make a mobile from a long spaghetti and threads tied with things pasted on, tiny pictures of me all orange and Ma all green and twisty foil and tufts of toilet paper. Ma fixes the top thread on Roof with the last pin from Kit, and the spaghetti dangles with all the little things flying from it when we stand under and blow hard. (101)

Those words come from Jack when he and Ma were playing. Ma teaches Jack to utilize secondary items and create toys from it. Kids at Jack's age usually trouble their parents to buy them different toys, while in room Jack creates the toys from the items that are not used anymore. Ma always creates toys from secondary items. It is not because she does not have money for buying the toys, but she wanted to be more creative using things around her although it is limited to fulfill everything that Jack want.

Ma gets Labyrinth and Fort down from on top of Wardrobe. We've been making Labyrinth since I was two, she's all toilet roll insides taped together in tunnels that twist lots of ways. Bouncy Ball loves to get lost in Labyrinth and hide, I have to call out to him and shake her and turn her sideways and upside down before he rolls out, when.

Then I send other things into Labyrinth like a peanut and a broken bit of Blue Crayon and a short spaghetti not cooked. (17)

It is started when Jack was two years old. Ma collects all the items that she needs and builds the labyrinth carefully with Jack. Jack seems to enjoy his toys, this enhances Jack's creativity and imagination to use the items around him. This shows that Ma has an intelligent caring woman characteristic. She has some ideas to make her son happy with limited tools, and explain the detailed things in her own language to make her son understand what she said.

Ma, living in a small room wants to fulfill all desires of Jack. Jack asks Ma for a birthday cake with five candles on fire. This time Ma uses her own idea to solve the problem because she does not have any candles. She prefers to use five chocolates with different colors. The first time Jack sees the cake, he says that the cake is not as good as what he want and does not like the real birthday cake because there are no candles like what he hopes for.

But you said a birthday cake, it's not a birthday cake if there's no five candles on fire." She puffs her breath. "I should have explained better. That's what the five chocolates say, they say you're five." "I don't want this cake." I hate it when Ma waits all quiet. "Stinky cake." (28)

In the end, Jack accepts the birthday cake because Ma talks some sense to him. The real birthday cake is not always a cake with candles on fire, chocolates also can be symbolized as a candle. Ma and Jack have limited access to get the things they want and it is important for Ma to choose things wisely. Jack is taught through demonstrations, illustrations, and narration of multiple stories. Therefore, Ma already gives Jack what he needs mentally and cognitively.

The third demand is social acceptability. Ruddick says “This skill of acceptability cannot naturally develop in social context but it has to be trained” (21). Every mother’s training strategy might be different such as persuasive, manipulative, educative, abusive, seductive, or respectful and are typically a mix of most of these. In the novel *Room* social acceptability can be seen through the good bonding between Ma and Jack. They both accept their roles and existence towards each other. Ma has taught Jack how to react and respond to her as his mother. This is the example for basic socialization. And not only with Ma, Jack has also developed interaction with Old Nick. He always thinks Old Nick to be a bad guy. They don’t really talk much about Old Nick since Ma wants to protect Jack from him.

Ma starts to control her son in almost everything. She gives schedules and order to Jack for daily activities, including in how to act towards Old Nick. Ruddick says “Normative motherhood assumes and dictates an asymmetrical relationship between mother and child: a mother is for the child, not the child for the mother” (11). But with Ma and Jack, their relationship is truly reciprocal. Ma needs Jack as much as Jack needs Ma. But because this reciprocity violates the roles and rules of normative motherhood based on society standard, Ma is labeled as a bad mother in her decision to keep Jack with her in captivity. However, despite her psychological trauma, Ma sees Jack as her salvation. She is willing to accept her responsibility as a mother more than her suffering. Her identity as a mother is self-created and sustained by reciprocal mother child love. Ma establishes resistance and achieves redemption in motherhood. In its portrayal of motherhood as both resistant and redemptive, *Room* offers a necessary challenge and corrective to normative motherhood.

The novel *Room* conveys how a mother is empowered through maternal authenticity and mother child reciprocity. Despite being strong in front of Jack as a

mother, Ma feels powerless towards Old Nick. She really depends on Nick for their daily needs and she cannot win him physically. For mothers, material space is arranged in such a way that their presence or absence is immediately visible. This situation has matched with Ma taking care of Jack inside the room where she conducts normative motherhood towards Jack. She takes care of everything related to Jack his need, activities, and his growth. Being locked in the room she does not give up. She grabs every opportunity to give Jack better chances in his needs. Despite being bitter and angry with Jack, Ma tries her best to be a good mother to him because she loves Jack.

Being a mother, women should fulfill its standard, according to the society. This standard can be seen as the space that limits their own way of motherhood to their children. Society wants to educate Ma about what is right and wrong in her way of motherhood and this has made her depressed. The main task of motherhood is always given to the mother since this is a patriarchal society. In the patriarchal society a woman serves as the construction material and as the place within which man dwell. Woman serves as the material envelope and container of man existence. Man seeks nostalgically to return home by making buildings and putting things in them that will substitute for that original home. Therefore, the task for nurturing the children will always be the mother's side. That's why the term motherhood is more acceptable instead of fatherhood. This pressure from the society has created a space to limit Ma's motherhood towards Jack. But still she makes her son as her strength and tries to forget about her vulnerability and pain in the past. Ma shows the determination of power as a woman and stands up against patriarchal system and oppression. The title *Room* is consequently self referential that represents the womb of the mother which shields the child throughout its life from all external and internal menaces, just like

Ma is seen guarding Jack all the five years in the Room from the Old Nick and outside from the frightening pursuit of media and the outside world.

In the novel *Room* Emma uses various techniques and narrative styles which adds significance to her work. The following chapter presents the techniques and style used in the novel.

Chapter Four

Facts and Arts: A Stylistic Analysis

As Jack is brought up in a confined space without knowing their state as prisoners, he makes friends with each and every object in the room. He takes extreme care of the objects as they are real to him. He calls every object in the room using pronouns 'he', 'she', 'her', 'his', which are attributed to human beings. Emma Donoghue explains in an interview at Richard & Judith Spring 2011 Bookclub that she was inspired by her children's behavior as 'they turn everything into a toy' and she adds that if they did not have friends and games they 'would make friends with a knife and a fork'. This sort of game that Ma invents to make at least her child's life happier appeared on the screens in 1997 with the Italian tragicomic movie *Life is beautiful*, directed by the Italian comedian Roberto Benigni.

Jack assumes every object in the room to be his own and he always takes special care to keep them safe. For instance, Jack asks Ma to feed the soil in the pot so that the plant can grow. And while playing Blind man's Buff, he is very cautious that he shouldn't squish the Eggsnake which is under the bed. According to Jack the lifeless objects Duvet, TV etc. in the room are the living things, for he thinks, he lives in the world i.e., the room with his mother, and that outside there's outer space with stars and planets zooming around.

Jack's description of objects in the room and calling them by names, gives fragrance to the stinky room. Examples: Wordy Ball- Ball made up of waste toilet papers stuffed in garbage bag, Games Box- Box in which his toys, puppets made of socks are placed, Crafts Tub- Box in which sewing things, crayons, pencils are kept. Jack's affection and affinity towards the object in the room can be surveyed through

the microscope named 'Object relations theory' which in psychoanalytic psychology is the process of developing a psyche in relation to others in the environment during childhood. According to this theory, the way people relate to others and a situation in their adult lives is shaped by the family experiences during infancy. The image of people and events are turned into objects in the unconscious that the "self" carries into adulthood and they are used by the unconscious to predict people's behavior in their social relationships and interactions. Objects are usually internalized image of one's mother, father, etc. although they could also consist of parts of a person such as an infant relating in one's inner world. Later experiences can reshape these early patterns, but objects often continue to exert a strong influence throughout life. Objects are initially observed in the infant mind by their functions and are termed part objects. Later these part object functions are comprehended into whole objects as the child grows up in a facilitating environment.

Right from his birth Jack grows up amidst the objects in the room. For an infant who is brought up in the world, the object recorded in its memory is shaped by the images of people, animals, birds and lively atmosphere of the world. But for Jack these objects recorded in his memory can't be shaped by any other things, people or events but only through the objects and the day to day happenings in the room. It is only because of this reason Jack is bonded to each and every object in the room. Jack's sadness because of the death of the Plant shows his love for a friend.

The object in the room exerts stronger influence on Jack than any other kid in the world because of growing in the room's cramped environment for nearly five years of time. This influence has turned into an obsession for Jack because the memories of these objects have no scope to be shaped as it is shaped by the environment of the world for other children. So, he is obsessed with the objects in the

room and also Ma. However, Jack's obsession to Ma and TV is very obvious throughout the novel.

Though Jack watches only two shows per day in TV, room's limited atmosphere gives scope to record the memory of even the trivial things and incidents in the TV and relate it to his life in his world i.e., the room. The restricted atmosphere of room and Ma's usage of TV as a linguistic tool helps Jack to be sharp and smart, at listening and grasping things at ease. For instance, Jack asks Ma's permission to keep Ma's bad tooth under the pillow to let a fairy change it into money through the inspiration of a story in the TV. His description of things, incidents, and people in TV, with a wonderful vocabulary tainted with innocence will definitely outsmart any other kid in the world of his age:

Today I put my fingers on Dora's head for a hug and tell her about my super power now I'm five, she smiles. She has the huge hair that's like a really brown helmet with pointy bits cutted out, it's a big as the rest of her. I sit back on her bed in Ma's lap to watch, I wriggle till I'm not on her pointy bones. She doesn't have many soft bits but they're super soft. (12)

For Jack objects in the room, things which Old Nick brings for Sunday treat, himself and Ma are real, while other things he watches in TV are things in different planets. It is fixed in his brain that whatever he uses in room is real and things he doesn't use but see in TV are persons & things in different planets. When he happens to see something in real which he had seen in TV, he is excited to the fullest level and craves to be with it. For instance, his fondness for the mouse which enters into the room through a hole and his amazement when he sees ants in the stove. However, TV

makes Jack to develop his imagination to the extent that he cannot distinguish between reality and TV programme. This creates social issues in Jack for he is growing up only with imaginary people with whom he always feels safe. So, he finds difficult to interact with real people in the world.

Jack is obsessed with Ma because she is the only person he can touch, feel, smell, talk, hear and play for real. Ma puts her entire attention on Jack to bring him up well. This makes Jack to be in a very intimate relationship with Ma. Jack feels very lonely and craves for Ma when she sleeps during day time because of depression. He always needs Ma to be with him. Jack is tormented with a feeling of insecurity when Ma is gone for the whole day. Jack can't even bear to imagine Ma gone for more than a day.

Jack's obsession for Ma can be noted obviously in their great escape plan and also during his stay in his grandma's house. He keeps Ma's bad tooth with him to ensure the presence of his Ma. "Are you there, Tooth? I can't feel you but you must be in my sock, at the side. You are a bit of Ma, a little bit of Ma's dead spit riding along with me"(171). Ma's bad tooth is the only thing that consoles Jack when he is with his Grandma. Jack sleeps in the room while his Ma sings songs to him. But when his Grandma sings the same song to him, he feels it sounds wrong and asks her to stop singing. He longs to be breastfed by his Mother before going to bed in his Grandma's house. He is frustrated by bad dreams and yearns for Ma's presence, he even tries to speak with her through his mind for he has a bit of Ma with him, that is the tooth.

Though, room is a cramped atmosphere with limited resources, one can find that the objects in the room symbolize the miserable life of Ma and Jack. The Skylight proves to be an important symbol as it portrays the theme of the novel. To Ma

Skylight allows a glimpse of the outside world which always remains out of reach. It serves as a reminder of Ma's captivity. For Jack Skyliht turns to be important only when he sees a leaf on it and also a real airplane in the sky through it. This proves him that they are not TV but real. Symbolically, the Skyliht is also a source of light and of hope for a dark and hopeless room. Another important symbol in *Room* is Jack's hair. As Ma doesn't cut his hair it grows past his shoulders. Symbolically it represents his strength, as Samson's hair with all its strength before it was cut off. This is reiterated by how Jack views himself as a protector and wants to hurt Old Nick when he finds out how he had hurt Ma's wrist. Ultimately Jack proves to be a brave child by his great escape. His hair also serves as a symbol of transformation for both Ma and Jack. In order to save Ma from her psychological breakdown he sends his hair to her. This helps Ma to recover from her psychosomatic illness. Jack's decision to cut his hair by himself shows his transformation as it affirms of his individuality.

Bad Tooth also gains importance in posing as a symbol in the novel as it shows Jack's obsession for Ma. Jack often thinks about Bad Tooth only during the great escape and also during his stay in his Grandma's house. He is less concerned about it when he is with his Ma. He thinks he has a bit of Ma always with him, when he thinks about the Bad Tooth. When he is in his Granma's house, he gets many dreams in which Ma's Bad Tooth, crumbling or breaking right in front of him. These dreams represent him as a powerless and helpless as a child. After Ma's return from hospital Jack realizes that he has swallowed the tooth. Though he is devastated at first he wonders if the tooth is going to be hiding inside him in a corner forever. This symbolically represent that Jack will have part of Ma inside him, even when they are separated and he needed Bad Tooth to realize it.

The sun and the moon, which are referred to as “God’s yellow face” and “God’s silver face” respectively, are the symbols of Ma’s faith in God and religion. Ma not only teaches Jack that God looks over the world but also she creates an environment where Jack will be exposed to her faith throughout the day, namely during meal times and also before going to sleep. Ma’s repeated reading of the religious book, *The Shack* serves as a good example of Ma’s faith. This book furthers Ma’s beliefs through the tale of the story and the heart touching moments embedded in it. This book is Ma’s ways of believing that God does make miracles happen and that salvation is possible.

Ma uses two films which she had seen in her teenage as symbols to create interest in Jack about the world and the life in the world. She tries to get his co-operation in devising a plan to escape from the room. They are *The Great Escape*, which is a film based on the escape of prisoners from the Nazi camp and *Alice in Wonderland*, which is a tale about Alice who enters into the blissful fantasy world through a rabbit hole. Ma teaches Jack through these symbols how to exhibit their escape plan however, not in an abrupt manner but gradually. Ma also uses the cartoon series *Dora and Bootie* and the story of *Count of Monte Cristo* to explain Jack about the escape plan.

Donoghue has written an unexpectedly hopeful book that speaks to human resilience in adversity, our capacity to survive. The novel profoundly teaches us about the nature and meaning of reality, how we construct our realities. Ma, being a sufferer of personal terror and trauma, creates a magical world for Jack. Though she cries and weeps bitterly inside, she makes Jack happy by her company and she suppresses her needs and desires to bring up Jack well. She becomes the best example to every

mother in the world who by depriving their dreams, make their children live in the world of hardships.

Jack's attachment to each and every object in the room shows his naivety and his lack of scope to explore. His obsession to Ma and TV helps him to develop his listening skills, creates issues of social interaction when he faces the real people and the symbols used by Ma depict the fear of Jack for accepting anything new also projects Jack to be a child with immense potential to accept and adapt to any situation.

Setting is one of the literary elements that helps in the development of the plot. Setting helps to imagine and visualize when and where the story happens. According to Meyer "setting can be used to evoke a mood or atmosphere that will prepare the reader for what is to come" (107). In this novel settings are divided into setting of place, time, and environment.

The setting of place is where an action takes place in a literary work. Holman says setting of place is "the actual geographical location, its topography, scenery, and such physical arrangements as the location of the windows and doors in a room" (413). As setting of place is a substantial element in every fiction, it will influence every element of the story. It will also give the sensation of the story. There are three major settings of place in the novel. The first place is called Room. Donoghue describes Room as eleven foot by eleven. Room is made off Old Nick's shed and located in his backyard. Ma and Jack cannot get out because Old Nick puts a keypad with a secret code number in the door. This place is important because this is the place where Ma is struggling against the oppression for the first time.

"Yeah, it's fresher. In the summer, it smells of cut grass, because we're in his backyard. Sometimes I get a glimpse of shrubs and

hedges.”

“Whose backyard?”

“Old Nick’s. Room is made out of his shed,
remember?”(114)

Although Ma and Jack stay in the Room for years, Ma refuses to call Room as home. She later mentions that it is a soundproof cell.

The second place is Cumberland Clinic. Cumberland Clinic becomes the first place for Jack and Ma to stay after coming out from Room. Cumberland Clinic is not only a general hospital but also a mental health hospital. It is noted from the conversation between Ma and a police.

“Now,” says the wide man, “I appreciate it’s late, and your son’s got some abrasions that need looking at, and they’re on standby for you at the Cumberland Clinic, it’s a very nice facility.”

“What kind of facility?”

Ah, psychiatric.” (198)

They get several medications both physical and psychological treatments with Dr. Clay and Noreen, the assistance. In the clinic, Ma and Jack stays in a room where Jack calls it as Room Number Seven. In this place, they try to recover and get engaged with the society. The Room Number Seven has a green wall, just like a typical room in a hospital.

The floor is like Rug but fuzzy with no pattern and no edges, sort of gray, it goes all the way to the walls, I didn’t know walls are green. There’s a picture of a monster, but when I look it’s actually a huge wave of the sea. A shape like Skylight only in the wall, I know what

it is, it's a sideways window, with hundreds of wooden stripes across it but there's light coming between. (211-212)

The third place is called Independent Living residential facility. Independent Living is a new place for Ma and Jack to start their new life after Room and Cumberland Clinic. It is a residential facility in a brown brick building. In independent living Ma and Jack live on the sixth floor.

An apartment's like a house but all squished flat. There's five rooms, that's lucky, one is the bathroom with a bath so we can have baths not showers. The stove does flames like at Grandma's. The next to the kitchen is the livingroom that has a couch and a low-down table and a super-big TV in it. (377)

It can be seen that Independent Living has a facility like a general house. From Independent Living, Jack starts to learn how to live physically independent from Ma. Here, Ma and Jack are starting a new life separated from Grandma and the doctors. They move to this place because Ma wants to start a new life in a new completely different place and she does not want to be haunted by her past.

Setting of time shows and gives a focus on when the story happens. Holman states that setting of time is a time or period when an action takes place, like an epoch in history or season of the year (413). It can be a current time or a historical time.

The setting of time in the novel *Room* happens from late winter in March until summer in May. When Ma and Jack are in Room the season is still the late winter as Ma says it to Jack: "Oh, it won't. It's April in three days" (96). Because Ma and Jack are out from the Room, they have to adapt to the environment especially Jack for whom it is the first time to enjoy the free air.

When they walk outside the Cumberland Clinic, the narrator explains the spring atmosphere where the sky looks bright and people spend much time outside. At the Cumberland Clinic they also celebrate Easter shortly after. Ma has to stay at the Cumberland Clinic for three or four weeks. When they decide to stay in the Independent Living Jack says that summer has arrived “Tomorrow is May Day, that means summer's coming and there's going to be a parade” (394).

Setting of social environment explains about the social condition that occurs in the story. Roberts in *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing* defined setting as “A work’s natural, manufactured, political, cultural, and temporal environment, including everything that characters know and own” (253). It means that setting of social environment includes everything that exists in the surrounding of the characters and directly affects the characters. Holman argues that setting of social environment is “the occupation and daily manner of living” (423). From Holman’s, setting of environment not only shows how the society works on the individual in a group but also the behavior and daily manner.

Ma comes from the middle-class family. It is proven on how much they can afford the cost of the mental health institution for Ma and Jack. It is never mentioned that their cost will be fully funded by the institution or Ma’s parents. Although Ma is an adopted child, her adoptive parents send her to college.

It also can be seen from the house where her mother lives. In the house, they have a personal fitness facility and all the rooms are divided into separate rooms. Jack describes that he finds it hard to learn because his Grandma’s house has many rooms. “The doors I’m let go in anytime are the kitchen and the living room and the fitness suite and the spare room and the basement, also outside the bedroom. That’s called the landing, like where airplanes would land but they don’t” (328).

Moreover after Ma has been kidnapped her adoptive father chose to move to Australia. It can be concluded that Ma's family comes from the middle class who can spend their money to build personal fitness and travel out the continent.

Ma comes from a quite religious family where she also teaches Jack about praising the God. Jack usually gives thanks to Baby Jesus before he eats something. "I eat so many bacon I lose count, when I say, "Thank you, Baby Jesus," people stare because I think they don't know him in Outside" (240). On the other side, the way Jack praises the God may differ from common people. It is because he always says God as Baby Jesus. They never have a proper prayer because they cannot go to the church both in Room or Cumberland Clinic. In Independent Living, Ma and Jack can finally go to church: "We go to two different churches. I like the one with the multicolored windows but the organ is too loud" (390).

It is infact, the expert use of literary style that enables her to successfully develop the dominant subjects of motherhood and the struggles. It is important, to state that Donoghue uses identical methods in her use of literary style to write almost all her novels despite the passage of time. The following chapter focuses on the important precepts dealt in the preceding chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

Room encompasses the theme of imprisonment and freedom. It portrays the bitter life of Ma and Jack inside the room. Emma Donoghue's intention to avoid the True Crime Genre is indeed to be applauded. She has brought in the pathos of confinement through a five- years-old boy. Donoghue's characterization of Ma and Jack convey the cause of long-term imprisonment, superficially as a fairy tale of little boy, but in depth as a horror story. She, in order to divert the theme of the novel from crime genre, makes the character of Old Nick to fade away in the novel. She says that her only focus in writing the book, is to evaluate the character of Ma and Jack, and to make the narrative poignant through the perspective of the five years old boy. But the voice of Jack makes the reader to ponder over the seriousness of confinement. *Room*, fits perfectly into a century where women are increasingly denouncing acts of violence against them, finding more space and ears ready to make their personal experiences known thanks to Mass Media and the growing popular interest in sharing traumas. According to Sarah Blackwood, 'Room is a formally inventive story about domesticity and sexuality'. She adds that 'it asks us to perform the politically important task of closely examining women's experience of all those top

Ma can be compared to Barathi Mukerjee's heroine, Jasmine and also John Galsworthy's hero, Falder. Before the birth of Jack, Ma, for two long years, is in solitary confinement. It is the impact of solitary confinement in her when she says to Jack that she used to sleep for hours together, talk, scream and watch TV for a whole day which even made her to behave as mad sometimes. Along with solitary confinement, the major assault she undergoes is the crudest sexual abuse almost every day in the room. Thus, the solitary confinement and the cruel sexual abuse, has made

her feel alienated and suffer stronger physical and psychological trouble like Jasmine and Falder, in Jasmine and Justice respectively.

This novel actually inspired by one real phenomenal criminal case in 2008 about Josef Fritzl that was worst cases in Austria's criminal history. It inspired Emma Donoghue to write the novel. The novel is also a criticism in high rate of child abduction in US. It describes the social conditions in that time with many of criminal case happen especially abduction of children that often occur in big cities like America. This novel is the reflection of high rate of child kidnapping. Related to literary as reflection of situation writer, Emma Donoghue is a mother that has five year old son and she writes this novel as reflection being mother who tries to understand children's world. It influenced her to write this novel uses child perspective as the manifestation of Emma as an adult who try to know children's perspective actually look likes.

Jack's pungent and percussive language grabs hold of his constricted life with startling force and zest. Donoghue fuses artistry and credibility with the five-year old Jack, for a child's perspective will be always fresh and packed with innocence. Jack tells the reader everything that goes on his room, things that are harmless and normal enough to him, but unwittingly shows as the horrific truth for instance, the scenes where Jack has to hide in the wardrobe and count the creaks Old Nick makes on the bed with Ma or his off-the-cuff descriptions of Ma's 'bad wrist' and 'rotted tooth', or the days where she simply lies in bed all day, acting 'gone'. Donoghue, through the character of Jack pours light and air into the prison cell, and transforms his story from a prudent horror show into a redemptive tale of resilience and salvation.

The difference in perspective lays the foundation of the novel's conflict and story. Ma's heroic and selfless attempts to create a semblance of normal life in *Room* helped preserve Jack from the true horrors of their situation. But Jack's room is not the same as Ma's room something that grows even more apparent in the novel's third part, after they escape and learn to adjust to the world outside. The outside world frightens Jack and he wants to go back to the room. It is where he feels safe, it is where the world behaves as it should. Adjusting his perspective is a constant struggle, particularly when no one on the outside even his Ma appears willing to understand his longing for Room.

Even though Ma's depicted completely through the eyes of her son, Ma is just as compelling a character as Jack perhaps even more because her development is only shown, and never told. One can figure it out because Jack's unable to understand the context of a nineteen year old girl taken from everything she knows only to return seven years later to find a world that's changed without her.

As Michael Cunningham, in his review of *Room* says, "Room is that rarest of entities" which is "potent, darkly beautiful and revelatory". It is a novel to be read through myriad lenses, psychological, sociological, political. It presents an utterly unique way to talk about love. All the while giving a fresh expansive eye on the world in which we live in. Donoghue herself says:

I would have never written *Room* if I hadn't glimpsed a way to make the Strangeness of Jack's Room somehow universal- a sort of microcosm of our world ...We all start in a very small place (the womb) and emerge into a bigger one, then again in childhood we gradually move from a narrow social

setting to a bewilderingly complex, even international one. So, Jack's journey is everyone's journey, just speeded up. (weblog)

The *Financial Times*, rightly reviews *Room* as, "in filling this book with things that are both truly horrific and rather lovely, Emma Donoghue has achieved a work that is deeply unsettling on every level."

The fact that Emma Donoghue adds the part of sharing the trauma within the public sphere into her novel is a really clever choice to represent the popular response to traumas. As Ann Cvetkovich underlines in her *An Archive of Feelings*, according to some people "we are living in a trauma culture" (50). In fact, she highlights how people are becoming more and more interested in violence cases as they get emotionally involved. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how the divulgation of trauma experiences is beneficial to the contemporary popular culture. According to her, trauma constitutes an "archive of feelings many forms of love, rage, intimacy, grief, shame and more".

Ma, as the leading female protagonist, faces four forms of oppression. At first, the female protagonist faces the subjective oppression because she is locked in Room by her captor, Old Nick. She later experiences the materials oppression because she cannot easily get her needs. The third oppression she gets is objective oppression. The female protagonist faces the objective oppression in the Cumberland Clinic which is a psychiatric clinic. She meets the doctor, the nurse, and the bigger society after Room. Because she cannot adapt to the society, she faces another form of oppression which is psychological oppression. This oppression is the result of denial and force she gets from people around her.

The female protagonist experiences amount of oppression in the different form.

As the effect of oppression, the female protagonist suffers from a psychiatric illness, psychological health, and the post-traumatic disorder which lead her to commit suicide. The female protagonist commits suicide when she is in the Cumberland Clinic. In accordance with what Loue and Sajatovic say in *Encyclopedia of Women's Health*, there are several factors that influence a person to commit suicide.

In this novel, the female protagonist experiences some social and psychological pressure when she comes out from the place where she experiences false imprisonment. In Room, Ma is only dealing with the captor and experiencing the oppression directly. Meanwhile, when she is in the Cumberland Clinic, there are many people who stand against her. First, as a woman as well as a mother, she is judged incapable to heal herself by the doctors of the Cumberland Clinic. Her situation as a victim of a false imprisonment makes her become a patient in a mental health institution where she needs to follow the treatment from the doctors. In addition to the forced treatment, Ma also gets a false judgment from the society. The denial from people around her about Jack as her son also affects her psychic health. In the end, she begins to show a depressed attitude and lose control.

I take off my shoes but not my clothes, I get in with Ma at last. She's warmy soft, I snuggle up but carefully. The pillow smells bad...

The bad is vomit, I remember from our Great Escape. "Wake up," I say to Ma, "you did sick on the pillow."

She doesn't switch on, she doesn't groan even or roll over, she's not moving when I pull her. This is the most Gone she's ever. (279)

The suicide happens at the end of her depressive episodes that occur sequentially.

The female protagonist begins to seclude herself into the room and away from everyone including her son. In the end, she is found trying to kill herself with sleeping

pills. In accordance with Loue and Sajatovic's analysis, the female protagonist tends to overdose in attempting suicide. In feminist perspective, suicide is also "liberation" where she will no longer feel the suffering she has experienced. Suicide is considered as problem solving to the female protagonist because she does not have to face people who try to knock her down. This is also a proof that the mental health institution cannot ensure the recovery of their patients but rather become another prison for the patients.

To overcome her oppression and to recover from her condition, Ma is kept away from other people. She gets an intensive care with the doctor and the nurse from Cumberland Clinic. Fortunately, she is successfully recovered and goes back home to meet her son, Jack. After going back home, Ma does not choose to live with her mother. She rather chooses to live a new life with Jack in Independent Living. She makes her son as her strength and tries to forget about her vulnerability and pain in the past. Ma shows the determination of power as a woman and stands up against patriarchal system and oppression.

Emma Donoghue also provides conclusion for three problem formulations that need to be answered. The first question is Ma's characteristics. Ma's characteristics is divided into three; well-endowed, intelligent caring woman and tough. Ma is characterized as well endowed; it can be seen from how she teaches her son with her knowledge and abilities. She has to give her son some lessons with limited tools, unlike normal mother does. Ma uses her basic knowledge to give some educations to her son, while her son believes that the only human is them. The second characteristics is intelligent caring woman, Ma gives Jack explanation about life through the television program and some tools that she asked to her perpetrator. She is concerned with Jack's growth and she does little things such as making cake for Jack

birthday with five chocolates although Jack asks for candles. She teaches her son in simply way, but educative.

The third characteristics is being tough, the condition that had happened to Ma brings her life into different situation which are not the same with her previous life. In this condition, her physiology is in turmoil. Ma believes she can pass through this condition and brings her former life back.

The second question is about her treatment. The abusive treatment that Ma received is mostly psychological abuse, and the other one is sexual abuse. At first, she is happy with her family. During the accident she is confused, immobilized, and incapable to maintain anything. She feels disgusted for not being able to do something and realize that there is no way out than to mourn. Ma spends this stage for nearly two years and after Jack with her, she has a hope to escape from the room.

The third question is how Ma's struggle to overcome her trauma. She passes this condition through Jack. There are two conditions, the first is safe haven and secure base. Jack is like a safe haven and secure base for Ma. Jack is a hope for Ma to escape and Ma's physically safe whenever she is with Jack. In this situation, before Ma has a son, she almost gave up with her condition After the presence of her son Ma has had a will, though trivial, to escape from her condition. The trauma she had makes her adaptable to overcome the fear within her.

Nevertheless, as the writer herself admits, the novel was not meant to be a crime novel but it is supposed to focus more on Jack, the superhero character and mother and child relationship. At this point the perception of *Room* acquires a subtle ambivalence. It is clear that *Room* was written following the popular demand of the trauma culture characterized by the denunciation of sexual abuses, violence against women and children with a sophisticated allusion to feminism. Therefore *Room* is a

misogynistic exploration of the suffering misogyny causes women which still preserve some characteristics typical of a fairy tale.

To conclude, though, *Room* is an ultimate story of love between the mother and the child, it is an obvious representation of the trauma culture as it throws light on the darkness of rape, abduction and captivity.

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A Reading of Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* as a Slave Narrative

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

By

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PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2021

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Plot Analysis	12
Three	Symbols – Trauma of Slavery	29
Four	Assimilation of New Culture	42
Five	Summation	53
	Works Cited	59

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **A Reading of Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* as a Slave Narrative** submitted to the Research Department of English, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Mirnalini Priya M. during the year 2019-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Ms. A Judit Sheela Damaynthi

Dr. T. Mary Manonmani

Guide

Rev. Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **A Reading of Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* as a Slave Narrative** submitted to the Research Department of English, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

April 2021

Thoothukudi

Mirnalini Priya M.

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PREFACE

This project entitled **A Reading of Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* as a Slave Narrative** analyses the sufferings and pains endured by Africans and African-Americans due to colonisation and slavery. It also shows how the culture gets assimilated due to colonisation and Slavery.

The first chapter **Introduction** presents a short introduction about African-American literature and throws light on the Slave Narrative genre. It also focuses on the biography of Yaa Gyasi and the general characteristics of her works.

The second chapter **Plot Analysis** explores the plot of the novel *Homegoing*. It focuses on the relationships between the separated characters and the complex relations between them.

The third chapter **Symbols – Trauma of Slavery** explores how the people of Ghana endured the pain and sufferings of slavery and oppression due to colonisation. It focuses on the problems faced by people in Africa after colonisation.

The fourth chapter **Assimilation of New Culture** depicts how the culture is safeguarded and transmitted from one generation to another in one side and how it gets assimilated due to slavery.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters and ultimately projects the hardships of colonisation, slavery and identity crisis and validates the study.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

The literature produced in the United States by the writers from African descents are African-American literature. After colonisation the writings of African-American gained the attention from the world. The themes like slavery, racism, religion, sense of home, segregation and migration are more prominent in African-American literature. African-American literature begins with the works of late 18th century writers like Phillis Wheatley (1753-84), who was the first African-American to publish her book. With the famous genre called Slave Narratives African-American literature reached its peak during the 19th century.

Slave Narrative genre of novels played a predominant role in African-American literature. Slave Narratives are the collections of sorrows, struggles, hardships of the slaves. Most of the Slave Narratives were written by the fugitive slaves about their lives after escaping from slavery. These works shed light on the African slaves' life and hardships in their new land. Their works deals with the themes of long denied freedom and equality. Jacobs (1813 - 1897) was the first female author to write a Slave Narrative, which was titled *Incidents in the Real Life of a Slave Girl*. This genre became popular among his contemporary writers. As slavery has created a large scare in the lives of African-American people, the impacts left by slavery can't be removed or forgotten. The aim of Slave Narrative was to gain sympathy from the slave owners, as it was their only way to escape their hardships. They tried to gain support for the abolitionist movement. Their writings were to prove the American people that, they too deserve all rights equal

to them. Their works became the virtual tool during the Civil War. The white abolitionists role in forming the design and content of Slave Narratives were predominant.

The post slavery era has seen abundant writers who came out to express the real condition of African-American writers in their non-fictions. One prominent writer among such writers is W.E.B. Du Bois who wrote a highly influential collection of essays titled *The Souls of Black Foly*. Elizabeth Keckley was a former slave who managed to establish a successful career as a dress maker later lost her job when her first book *Behind the Scenes; or, Thirty Years as a Slave and Four Years in the White House* was published.

During the 19th and 20th centuries great migration took place due to World War I and World War II. Migration developed a new sense of independence in the black community. The contribution of black community to the black vibrant urban culture is seen during the Harlem Renaissance. This new grown sense is black nationalism. James Baldwin was the pioneer of black nationalism. He has contributed to this new form of literature by writing nearly twenty books. The writers like Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison were also famous during this period. Many female black poets like Gewendolyn Brooks, the Pulitzer prize awardee, voiced out through their writings during the period of Civil War.

When the Civil War ended, reconstruction offered a brief respite from the violence of racism that pervaded the years before and during the Civil War. However, hopes for a more egalitarian future quickly dimmed with the rise of Jim Crow laws in the American South. Offering different theoretical perspectives on the

future for black writers in the United States, both Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois penned important essays concerning social mobility and access to employment and education. Washington's *Up from Slavery* (1901) appeared in close proximity to DuBois's *Souls of Black Folk* (1903), both of which have become canonical in tracing the literary and political histories of African-American thinkers.

In the 1910s and 1920s, black writers grew more prominent in genres of fiction and poetry. After emigrating from Jamaica, Claude McKay quickly became a renowned voice in modern poetry. Some of his most notable poems deal with early questions of civil rights and racial prejudice. The Harlem Renaissance was an electrifying period during which huge numbers of African-Americans threw off the shackles of discrimination, exploitation, and poverty in the south and moved north. With the feeling of liberation and the discovery of other like-minded folk, artists, writers, painters, and dancers engaged in bursts of furious creativity. Some common themes represented during the Harlem Renaissance were the influence of the experience of slavery and emerging African-American folk traditions on black identity, the effects of institutional racism, the dilemmas inherent in performing and writing for elite white audiences, and the question of how to convey the experience of modern black life in the urban North. The African-Americans used art to prove their humanity and demand for equality. The Harlem Renaissance created more opportunities for blacks to be published by mainstream houses. Many authors began to publish novels, magazines and newspapers during this time. The new fiction attracted a great amount of attention from the nation at large. Among authors who became nationally known were Jean Toomer, Jessie Fauset, Claude

McKay, Zora Neale Hurston, James Weldon Johnson, Alain Locke, Omar Al Amiri, Eric D. Walrond and Langston Hughes.

Beginning in the 1970s, African-American literature reached the mainstream as books by black writers continually achieved best-selling and award-winning status. This was also the time when the work of African-American writers began to be accepted by academia as a legitimate genre of American literature. As part of the larger Black Arts Movement, which was inspired by the Civil rights and Black Power Movements, African-American literature began to be defined and analyzed. A number of scholars and writers are generally credited with helping to promote and define African-American literature as a genre during this time period, including fiction writers Toni Morrison and Alice Walker and poet James Emanuel.

James Emanuel took a major step towards defining African-American literature when he edited *Dark Symphony: Negro Literature in America* (1968), a collection of black writings. This anthology, and Emanuel's work as an educator at the City College of New York, heavily influenced the birth of the genre. Other influential African-American anthologies of this time included *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing*, edited by LeRoi Jones and Larry Neal in 1968; *The Negro Caravan*, co-edited by Sterling Brown, Arthur P. Davis and Ulysses Lee in 1969; and *We Speak as Liberators: Young Black Poets - An Anthology*, edited by Oorde Coombs and published in 1970.

Toni Morrison, meanwhile, helped to promote Black Literature and authors when she worked as an editor for Random House in the 1960s and 70s, where she edited books by such authors as Toni Cade Bambara and Gayl Jones. Morrison

herself would later emerge as one of the most important African-American writers of the 20th century. Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, was published in 1970. Her most famous novels *Beloved*, won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988. This story describes a slave who found freedom but killed her infant daughter to save her from a life of slavery. Another important novel is *Song of Solomon*, a tale about materialism, unrequited love, and brotherhood. Morrison is the first African-American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

In the 1970s novelist and poet Alice Walker wrote a famous essay that brought Zora Neale Hurston and her classic novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* back to the attention of the literary world. In 1982, Walker won both the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award for her novel *The Color Purple*. An epistolary novel, *The Color Purple* tells the story of Celie, a young woman who is sexually abused by her stepfather and then is forced to marry a man who physically abuses her. The novel was later made into a film by Steven Spielberg. The 1970s also saw African-American books topping the bestseller lists. Among the first to do so was *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* by Alex Haley. A fictionalised account of Haley's family history: beginning with the kidnapping of his ancestor Kunta Kinte in Gambia through his life as a slave in the United States— *Roots* won the Pulitzer Prize and became a popular television mini series. Haley also wrote *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* in 1965.

Other important writers in recent years, who wrote literary fiction includes writers like Gayl Jones, Rasheed Clark, Ishmael Reed, Jamaica Kincaid, Randall Kenan, and John Edgar Wideman. African-American poets have also garnered attention. Maya Angelou read a poem at Bill Clinton's inauguration, Rita Dove won a

Pulitzer Prize and served as Poet Laureate of the United States from 1993 to 1995, and Cyrus Cassells's *Soul Make a Path through Shouting* was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1994. Cassells is a recipient of the William Carlos Williams Award. Natasha Trethewey won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry with her book *Native Guard*. Lesser-known poets such as Thylia Moss also have been praised for their innovative works. Notable black playwrights include Ntozake Shange, who wrote *ForColored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf*, Ed Bullins; Suzan-Lori Parks; and the prolific August Wilson, who won two Pulitzer Prizes for his plays. Most recently, Edward P. Jones won the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for *The Known World*, his novel about a black slave holder in the antebellum south.

Young African-American novelists include David Anthony Durham, Tayari Jones, Kalisha Buckhanon, Mat Johnson, ZZ Packer and Colson Whitehead, just to name a few. African-American literature has also crossed over to genre fiction. A pioneer in this area is Chester Himes, who in the 1950s and 60s wrote a series of pulp fiction, detective novels featuring "Coffin" Ed Johnson and "Gravedigger" Jones, two New York City police detectives. Himes paved the way for the later crime novels of Walter Mosley and Hugh Holton. African-Americans are also represented in the genres of science fiction, fantasy and horror, with Samuel R. Delany, Octavia E. Butler, Steven Barnes, Tananarive Due, Robert Fleming, Brandon Massey, Charles R. Saunders, John Ridley, John M. Faucette, Sheree Thomas and Nalo Hopkinson being just a few of the well-known authors. African-American literature has gained added attention through the works of talk-show host Oprah Winfrey, who repeatedly has leveraged her fame to promote literature through the

medium of her Oprah's Book Club. This brought large audience to African-American literature.

Most of the African countries have a varied tradition and culture. Ghana, one of the West African country is one among them. Ethnically, the people of Ghana may be said to belong to one broad group within the African family, but there is a large variety of subgroups. On the basis of language, it is possible to distinguish at least seventy-five of these. Many of these are very small, and only ten of them are numerically significant. The largest of these groups are the Akan, which includes the Anyi, Asante, Baule, Fante, and Guangn Mole-Dagbani, Ewe, Ga-Adangme, and Gurma. Trading slaves for muskets, among other western commodities, the Asantes' acquire great local power. Their king, the Asantehene, enthroned on a traditional golden stool, holds sway over the entire central region of modern Ghana. But the Asante suffer a series of major blows between 1804 and 1814, when the Danes, British and Dutch each in turn outlaw the slave trade. In 1957 Ghana became independent after decades of colonialism.

Ghanaian literature is traditionally based on oral literature as most histories and stories were passed on by spoken word through song, poetry and folktales. The famous include Ama Ata Aidoo, Kofi Awoonor, Tyie Selasi, William Boyd, Quobna Ottokah Cugoano, Aiy Kwei Armah and Nil Ayikel Parkers.

Ama Ata Aido (1942 -) is a Ghanaian poet, play wright and academician. Aidoo was born in Saltpond in the Central Region of Ghana. She was raised in a Fante royal household, the daughter of Nana Yaw Fama, chief of A beadzi Kyiakor, and Maame Abasema. She grew up at a time of resurgent British neocolonialism

that was taking place in her homeland. Her grandfather was murdered by neocolonialists, which brought her father's attention to the importance of educating the children and families of the village on the history and events of the era. He opened up the first school in their village which influenced Aido to attend the Wesley Girls High school where she first decided she wanted to be a writer. Aido's works of fiction particularly deal with the tension between Western and African world views. Her notable works are *The Dilemma of the Ghost* (1965), *Anowa* (1970), *Our Sister Killjoy* (1977), and *Changes* (1991). Her first novel, *Our Sister Killjoy*, remains one of her most popular works. Many of Aido's protagonists are women who defy the stereotypical women's roles of their time, as in her play *Anwoa*. Her novel *Changes* won the 1992 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book in Africa. She is also an accomplished poet. Her collection *Someone Talking to Sometime* won the Nelson Mandela Prize for Poetry in 1987. She has also written several children's books.

Kofi Awoonor (1935 - 2013) was a Ghanaian poet and author whose work combined the poetic traditions of his native Ewe people and contemporary and religious symbolism to depict Africa during decolonization. George Kofi Nyidevu Awoonor-Williams was born in Wheta, in the Volta region of Ghana. He spent the early 1970s in the United States, studying and teaching at Stony Brook University, where he obtained his Ph.D. in 1972. While in the United States he wrote *This Earth, My Brother* and *Night of My Blood*, both books published in 1971. Awoonor returned to Ghana in 1975 as head of the English department at the University of Cape Coast. Within months he was arrested for helping a soldier accused of trying

to overthrow the military government and was imprisoned without trial; Awoonor was later released when his sentence was remitted in October 1976. *The House by the Sea* is about his time in jail. After imprisonment he became politically active. He continued to write mostly non-fiction. His notable works are *This Earth, My Brother, London* (1971), *Comes the Voyager at Last* (1992), *The Breast of the Earth: A Survey of the History, Culture, and Literature of Africa South of the Sahara* (1975), *Ghana: A Political History from Pre-European to Modern Times* (1990), *The African Predicament: Collected Essays* (2006). Awoonor was Ghana's ambassador to Brazil from 1984 to 1988, before serving as his country's ambassador to Cuba. From 1990 to 1994 Awoonor was Ghana's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, where he headed the committee against apartheid. He was also a former Chairman of the Council of State, the main advisory body to the president of Ghana, serving in that position from 2009 to January 2013. On 21 September 2013, Awoonor was among those killed in an attack at the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi. He was in Kenya as a participant in the Storymoja Hay Festival, a four-day celebration of writing, thinking and storytelling, at which he was due to perform on the evening of his death.

William Boyd (1952 -) is a Scottish novelist, short story writer and screenwriter. Boyd was selected in 1983 as one of the twenty "Best of Young British Novelists" in a promotion run by *Granta* magazine and the Book Marketing Council. Boyd's novels include: *A Good Man in Africa*, a study of a disaster-prone British diplomat operating in West Africa, for which he won the Whitbread Book award and Somerset Maugham Award in 1981. *An Ice-Cream War*, set against the

background of World War I campaigns in colonial East Africa, which won the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction in 1982. *Brazzaville Beach*, published in 1991, deals about a story of a scientist researching chimpanzee's behaviour in Africa; and *Any Human Heart*, written in the form of the journals of a fictitious male 20th-century British writer, which won the Prix Jean Monnet de Littérature Européenne and was longlisted for the Booker Prize in 2002. *Restless*, the tale of a young woman who discovers that her mother had been recruited as a spy during World War II, was published in 2006 and won the Novel of the Year award in the 2006 Costa Book Awards. Boyd's novel *Waiting for Sunrise* was published in 2012. Following *Solo* in 2013, *Sweet Caress* was published in 2015, the fourth novel Boyd has written from a woman's viewpoint. His fifteenth novel, *Love is Blind*, was published in 2018. Several collections of short stories by Boyd have been published, including *On the Yankee Station* (1981), *The Destiny of Nathalie 'X'* (1995), *Fascination* (2004) and *The Dreams of Bethany Mellmoth* (2017). In his introduction to *The Dream Lover* (2008), Boyd says that he believes the short story form to have been key to his evolution as a writer.

Yaa Gyasi (1989 -) is a Ghanaian-American novelist. Her debut novel, *Homegoing*, published in 2016, won her, at the age of 26, the National Book Critics Circle's John Leonard Award for best first book, the PEN/Hemingway Award for a first book of fiction, the National Book Foundation's "5 under 35" honors for 2016 and the American Book Award. She was awarded a Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Literature in 2020. At a young age Gyasi achieved a level of commercial and critical success with her first novel. Gyasi was born in Mampong,

Ghana. She is the daughter of Kwaku Gyasi, a professor of French at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, and Sophia, who is a nurse. Her family moved to the United States in 1991 when her father was completing his Ph.D. at Ohio State University. The family also lived in Illinois and Tennessee. From the age of ten, Gyasi was raised in Huntsville, Alabama. Her debut novel *Homegoing* (2016) was inspired by a 2009 trip to Ghana, Gyasi's first since leaving the country as an infant. The Cape Coast Castle made an immediate impression on Gyasi. She noticed the differences in the gorgeous residential apartments for the British soldiers and their wives and the slave dungeons. She completed her debut novel *Homegoing* in 2016. Each chapter in the novel follows a different descendant of an Asante woman named Maame, starting with her two daughters, who are half-sisters, separated by circumstance: Effia marries James Collins, the British governor in charge of Cape Coast Castle, while her half-sister Esi is held captive in the dungeons below. Subsequent chapters follow their children and following generations. The novel touches on several notable historical events, from the introduction of cocoa as a crop in Ghana and the Anglo-Asante wars in Ghana to slavery and segregation in America. Because of the novel's scope, which covers several hundred years of history and fourteen characters, it has been described as a novel in short stories where each chapter is forced to stand on its own.

Gyasi mentions that Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, Edward P. Jones's *Lost in the City*, and Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth* as her inspirations. Only after reading *Songs of Solomon* by Tony Morison at

the age of seventeen she was inspired to choose a career in writing. Gyasi's second novel *Transcendent Kingdom* was published on 1st September 2020. This novel deals about the life of a twenty-eight years old Ph.D. candidate named Gifty and her Ghanaian-American mother who is suffering from depression.

This project paper focus on the important aspects of the novel *Homegoing* such as slavery, oppression, assimilation of culture and identity due to colonisation in the Ghanaian society. The second chapter deals with the crisis of enslavement and oppression faced by the African in their own land as well as in America.

Chapter Two

Plot Construction

The story line of the novel *Homegoing* takes place over several centuries and touches on many landmarks and histories of both Ghana and America. In Ghana the story begins in the mid-1700s. During that time, Ghana was made up of several Akan nation-states which made an empire. Ghana was called as the Gold Coast. Gyasi focuses on two of the states the Asante and the Fante throughout the novel. Gyasi also documents the region's trade with the British. The British subsequently took advantage of an existing system of taking war prisoners as slaves by the nations. They brought the slaves to use in the trans-Atlantic slave trade which was also known as the triangular trade. During that period the Asantes and Fantes maintained varied alliances with the British and with each other. In the year 1874, after the abolition of large amount of slavery, the British made Ghana as their British Crown Colony. In 1896, the British overthrew the Asante King Prempeh I, during a war. The Asantes rebelled against the British rule in 1900. The British demanded over the golden stool, the soul of the Asante nation and the symbol of sovereignty. A conflict arises and at the end of the conflict the Asantes were being annexed into British empire. But they maintained their independence until Ghana as a whole gained independence in 1957.

The novel *Homegoing*, touches the slavery system that resulted from trans-Atlantic slave trade, in which the slaves are transported from Ghana to Britain and the United States for forced labor. Slaves are mostly transported to Southern parts of America. This slave trade was outlawed in 1808, but the slavery remained intact

in the United States until the Civil War. Because of the brutality of the working and living conditions the slaves tried to escape. In 1793 Fugitive Slave Act was enforced and this made freed slaves to be recaptured. After slavery was abolished the convict lease system began. During the Reconstruction Era the private contractors purchase the convict from state or local governments. This resulted in the unjust arrest of many African-Americans. Gyasi also focuses on the Great Migration, in which 1.6 million African-Americans moved from southern rural areas to northern industrial cities between 1916 and 1930. Another 5 million moved between 1940-1970. The migration caused a new flourishing of culture in those large cities like New York. Thus New York city becomes the birthplace of Harlem Renaissance. The novel *Homegoing* also focuses on the contemporary topics like the War on Drugs. There were major racial disparities in arrests or imprisonment for drug possession in the United States. Gyasi sets the story line of *Homegoing* the historical fiction around most of the important historical events took place in Ghana and America.

Homegoing traces the lives of the descendants of an Asante woman in the 1700s named Maame. Maame had two daughters one in the Fante village when she was a slave and the other in the Asante land after escaping from being a slave to Cobbe. Effia was Maame's first daughter and Esi was the second. Gyasi begins the novel with the family tree of the two descendants of Maame. From the two branches in the family tree one contains the names of the descendants of Effia and the other one contains the names of Esi's descendants. The novel is divided into two parts. The chapters in the novel *Homegoing* are named after Effia, Esi and their

descendants. The chapters titled Quey, James, Abena, Akua, Yaw and Marjorie are named after the descendants of Effia. The chapters titled Ness, Kojo, H, Willie, Sonny and Marcus are named after the descendants of Esi. The first chapter is Effia, and the second is Esi. Then the chapters are arranged alternatively, like one descendant of Effia and the next is the descendant of Esi. This continues till the final chapter.

The novel *Homegoing* opens with the birth of Effia outside her father Cobbe Otcher's compound in a Fanteland. The night Effia was born, a fire is raging through the woods in Fanteland. Effia was taken care by Cobbe's first wife Baaba. Baaba's ill-treatment of Effia and her love for her son Fiifi highlights the importance of being related to blood, as Effia was not her biological daughter. When Effia turns twelve, she was noticed for her beauty. Cobbe tells Effia that he has big plans for her wedding, and that she will not marry a white man. Cobbe's words describes the marriage as a political tool for Fante. Effia hopes that she will be married to Abeeku Badu, the next in line to become the village chief. Baaba asks Effia that she must not let anyone except Baaba know when she bleeds, because Abeeku asked Baaba to inform him when she bleeds first to make arrangements for their marriage. This shows the reinforcement of stereotype of women's sole purpose being to provide children. At the age of fifteen Effia menstruated for the first time. But Baaba hid it to Abeeku. Cobbe sends Baaba and Effia over to Abeeku's compound once a week so that the new chief Abeeku can remember how much he likes Effia. James Collins, the newly appointed governor of the Cape Coast Castle asks for Effia's hand in marriage. This made Cobbe angry. But Baaba convinced

him that Effia should marry James because Effia might not have children, and James is willing to marry her regardless. Baaba spreads lies about Effia in order to send her out of the village. Before Effia leaves for the Castle Baaba gives her a black stone pendant and says that it was a piece of her mother to be kept with her. The stone left by her biological mother Maame symbolises the connection to their heritage and in turn Effia passes this stone to her descendants, ending with Marjorie at the end of the novel. Effia is married with James Collins in the chapel in the Cape Coast Castle. This proves how Christianity is used as a means of colonisation. Even though James accepts Effia's culture he believes his own culture is superior shows the typical attitude of a coloniser. When Effia finds that she was pregnant with James Collin's child she comes to know that her father is in his death bed. She travelled to her village. Fiifi reveals that Baaba was not her real mother. Maame was her mother who was once a slave of Cobbe. After Cobbe's death Effia leaves to the compound. Baaba says "You are nothing from nowhere. No mother and now no father." She looked at Effia's stomach and smiled. What can grow from nothing?" (27). Baaba still can't love Effia even though she raised her. Instead of blaming Cobbe's infidelity and his violation of Maame, Baaba blames the victim and the product of her husband's crime.

Esi was just fifteen years old when she was being held in the women's dungeon at the Cape Coast Castle. She was surrounded by hundreds of women and she describes the unbearable smell in the slave dungeons. Two weeks ago before being captured, Esi had been preparing to marry a man from her village named Kwasi Nnuro. A woman named Afua was crying nearby Esi, as she stopped

producing milk for her baby. A soldier takes her baby when she was crying, Tansi, Esi's friend says that the soldier would kill the baby. The next morning, they find that the mother Afua killed herself by holding her breath. Esi's chapter showcases the condition of the life in the dungeon of the Cape Coast Castle.

Esi recalled her life before coming to the Castle, where she had a good family. Her mother Maame refuses to bring a slave girl as she experienced the pain and suffering of being a slave girl to Cobbe. Through the slave girl Esi comes to know the past of her mother Maame. "You are not your mother's first daughter. There was one before you. And in my village we have a saying about separated sisters. They are like a woman and her reflection, doomed to stay on opposite sides of the pond." (38-39). This saying in slave girl Abronoma's village correlates with the story of Effia and Esi who are in the same Castle but couldn't meet each other. They are separated by the opposite sides of slavery, where Effia's husband James is a slave trader and Esi is a slave in the dungeon. But their Marjorie and Marcus gets a chance to meet each other in the final chapter of the novel. Esi's father screams at Maame to take Esi into the woods, when he comes to know that their enemies are attacking their village. She grabs her mother, but Maame protests. She starts to whisper, "No more woods. No more fire." (42) Maame's fear connects to her past experience of slavery. She doesn't want to be a slave again. Maame gives a beautiful black stone to Esi and she says that she had left one like this for her sister too. Esi escapes and climbs the tall palm tree, but soon the warriors captured her along with many villagers. White men consider themselves superior above black women, and it is exemplified in how they treat Esi. A soldier

sexually assaults her in his room above the dungeon. She tries to resist but the lack of food and the wounds from beatings made her too weak to do so. She is shipped off soon afterwards, and when she catches Governor James's eyes he gives her a pitying smile. Esi has learnt, however, that "White men smiling just meant more evil was coming with the next wave" (42). Esi loses her stone which was given by her mother, symbolises her loss of culture and family as a result of slavery.

Quey was the son of Effia and James Collins. He had been raised in Cape Coast Castle and educated in England. After the death of his father, the governor at Cape Coast had asked him to go back to the village and work with Abeeku Badu to strengthen their trading. As a bilingual man Quey reluctantly accepts this offer. Quey meets his uncle Fiifi in the village. He refused to Quey when he asked him to stop doing business with any other trading companies. Quey does not have any sibling. Effia forced him to interact with Cudjo, the son of a chief of a Fante village. Cudjo was the only friend of Quey. He stays with him in his village before going to England for education. When Quey returns from England Cudjo writes a message inviting him to visit his village. Quey compares his travel to England with the ship which transports slaves. He feels ashamed of his father, for sending him to England like the slaves. Abeeku asks Quey's mother Effia to meet him. Effia was not interested in her son's new job. Cudjo became the chief of his village. Fiifi had a large wound, in spite of this he captured two large warriors and a young girl Nana Yaa, who was the daughter of the Asante King. Fiifi mentions Quey as his son. Fiifi mentions that, as per the Fante culture mothers and sisters are more important. He

also says that if a person is a chief, his sister's son is his successor because his sister is born of his mother, but his wife is not. Effia is not the daughter of Fiifi's mother Baaba. Fiifi and Baaba hated her. Fiifi says that everything he has built in the village will soon come to nothing because he has sons but no sisters. Fiifi tells Quey that he will marry Nana Yaa the next night. So that the Asante king cannot kill him or anyone in the village. This will make Quey a powerful man. Quey accepts to marry her.

Ness the daughter of Esi was a slave in Thomas Allan Stockham's plantation. She had been taken from her mother in 1796. Her mother spoke to her in Twi until a slave owner beat her viciously for speaking in Twi. Esi called Ness as Maame before that incident. But later she began to call her Ness, a shortened version of the word goodness. Tim Tam, a slave who was specially treated by the owner tried to start a conversation with her. But she doesn't respond properly. Tom Allan wanted to make her a house slave. But she was not selected because of her scars which she gained from the plantations where she worked previously. Then she goes back to her regular work in the field. One night Tim Tam approaches the female field slave quarters with his daughter Pinky. Ness says that there is nothing no worry, she had hiccups. All slaves want Pinky to talk. Ness says that Pinky must be left alone. Pinky indicated that she wanted to stay with Ness that night. Pinky did not stop hiccupping for days, but she became inseparable from Ness. Tom Allan said that he will deal with her later, when his son Tom Jr. complains that Ness was going to hit him with the cane, by hiding his fight with Pinky. That night Ness thought about the plantation where she worked earlier which she calls Hell.

She was married to a slave named Sam, whom she didn't know. Both Sam and Ness were treated like animals who were made to join hands in the name of marriage without their own concern. Ness was whipped mercilessly for a mistake made by Sam. Sam took her to an herbal doctor, and apologised for his mistake. Then they both start to love each other. When Tim Tam came forward to solve the problem with Ness and their owner, she refuses by saying that she could fight her own battles. Again she recalls her past, about her child's birth and how she and Sam tried to change the fate of their child by escaping from slavery. They both and their child Kojo, with the help a woman named Ma Aku escaped the plantation. Aku had good experience in taking people out of slavery. They used to walk during night and they hide high in trees during the day. One night the owner of the plantation, who is called as devil by Ness arrives with his dogs and finds them. In order to save their son, they say to the owner that he is dead on the way. He whipped Ness and he made her watch as Sam was hanged from a tree. Ness's boldly footsteps echo her mother Esi's bloody trail in the second chapter as she walked to slavery. This implies that the hardships of that oppressive system are being passed down from mother to daughter. She was waiting for the punishment from Tom Allan when she was recalling her past and she asks for forgiveness of her sins and deliverance from evil and protection for her son Kojo.

James Richard Collins the son of Quey Collins and Nana Yaa hears that the Asantes have Governor Charles MacCarthy's head. He again hears a news from a white man that Quey's wife Nana Yaa's father, the Asante King has died. Even though it is dangerous to travel to the Kumasi due to political situation, Nana Yaa,

Quey and James set off for the funeral of the Asante King. Quey says to his friend David that James will marry Amma Atta, the daughter of Abeeku Badu's successor. This marriage would fulfill the promise that Cobbe had made to Effia. The funeral began a day later to the burial. One girl approached James but didn't shake his hand as an act of condolences. She told him that she refused to shake the hand of a slaver. He felt incredibly attracted to her. He grabs her hand when she was on her way to her house and says that he wants to marry her. Much of James's story line involves trying to create a better life for himself and his future descendants than the one he inherited from his mother and father, particularly having love marriage rather than the political marriage. He tells her to hide her blood when it comes, and he will come back for her and start a new life in a small village. James then marries Amma, but never wanted to sleep in her hut. Amma asks him to go the apothecary because people would start to wonder why she was not getting pregnant. James meets the apothecary and says that he wants to leave Asanteland, marry Akosua and work as a farmer. James already came with a plan to join the army and pretend to be killed. The apothecary also tells him that the Asantes will be attacking Efutu soon. James tells his family that he is going back to the Castle with Effia, but he instead goes to Efutu. James helps a Scottish doctor in Efutu in treating soldiers. The Asante attacked Efutu, he creates a plot and made everyone believe that he is dead in the war. Then he reaches Akosua after a long journey by foot to Asanteland. She was waiting for him.

Kojo, the son of Ness and Sam escaped the plantation with Ma Aku. He was working on the boats in the Fell's point in Maryland. Racism was still the part of his

life. Black men would be questioned first about robbery and illegal affairs by the police. His adopted mother and his wife Anna works for a white family named Mathisons. Agnes, Beulah, Cato, Daly, Eurias, Felicity and Gracie were the children of Kojo and Anna. Anna was pregnant with their next child. Each child gets their name in alphabetical order, so they called next unborn child as H. The Mathisons spoke about the new law drafted, which would send back the runaway slave back to south from the north, no matter how long ago they escaped. Due to this Kojo and Ma Aku would be in danger but Anna and their children would escape. The Fugitive Slave Act was passed on the day of the wedding of Kojo's first daughter Agnes. There were rallies and protests throughout the north. Mr. Mathison remained Kojo to take all his papers whenever he goes out. One day Anna didn't come back after work. Timmy, the husband of Agnes draws a picture of her. Kojo asks every one whom he meets, about his wife by showing that picture. And one day a police man noted his activities, threatened him and tore the only picture he had. A boy says to Mr. Mathison that he had seen a white man taking a pregnant woman into his carriage. Kojo thought that they might have sold her to slavery. Years passed, Ma Aku is dead, Agnes had three children Beulah got pregnant, Cato and Daly both married, Eurias and Grace found work for their living. Jo stopped working in ships and went to New York. Kojo used to worry that his family line had been cut off, lost forever.

Abena is the daughter of James and Akosua. Since her father's crops didn't grow well, nobody in the village wants to marry her. She is not even accepted as a second wife by her childhood friend Ohene Nyarko. She had a wish to go to Kumasi

to meet different people and to see the Asante King's palace. Her father refused her but her mother says that she should go there. With the help of Ohene Nyarko goes to Kumasi. She wishes to see the Golden stool, which contains the soul of the Asante nation. For the first time Abena meets a white man, he took her to the Missionary. On the way back to her village Ohene promises her that she would marry her when he had his next big harvest. The village haven't seen any good harvest for next six years. Ohene and Abena continued to have sex together but because of bad harvest they couldn't get married. The elders of the village decided to remove Abena from the village if she conceives a child or after seven years of bad harvest. Abena visits Ohene's hut on the third day of the sixth bad year. Ohene is going to try new seeds of cocoa that year. The cocoa seeds have him good harvest. The elders asked Abena to stay back in the village as they had good harvest and she is not conceived. But Ohene is still not ready to marry her because he had to spend a lot to give bride price to marry a woman whom he promised as a part of cocoa trade. Abena decided to leave the village. Her father gave her the black stone given by Abena's great-great-grandmother Effia. The next day she sets out to the missionary church in Kumasi. The stone symbolises the ties to her family. The introduction of the cocoa seed in this chapter shows the modern day Ghana, which was the world's leading producer of cocoa during the 20th century.

The second part of the novel *Homegoing* begins with the story of H. H's chapter focus on the problems of being a slave and being a free man after slavery. H doesn't have a proper name. He says "My old master say H is what my mama used to call me. They asked her to name me somethin' proper before she gave

birth but she refused. She killed herself. Master said they had to slice me out her belly 'fore he died." (165). As he couldn't pay the fine of ten dollars so he was sold to the coal mine in Alabama. Men were whipped for not shoveling their required quota of coal and explosions in mines were the major threat to the mine workers. H's description of the mine has lot of similarities with the description of plantation where Ness worked. Men who were arrested for small crimes were brought to work in the mines. H helps Tomas, a white man by taking two shovels at a time to meet their quotas. Once H is freed he went to Pratt City where many people like him would live. He stays with this friend Joecy's family. H cheated a woman Ethe by calling her in a different name, even though he loves her when he was free before going to the mine. Ethe was angry with him. With the help of Joecy's son H sends a letter to Ethe. He then joins the same mine as a free laborer. As Joecy asked him to join the union, he joins and later his voice became a major part of the union. After long days of protest, the bosses agreed to pay fifty more cents to the workers. When the union won the strike, H finds Ethe in his house's kitchen cooking for him. Ethe forgives him for his mistake.

Akua was brought up in a missionary school, where her mother Abena went after leaving her village. Akua is feared of her dreams, in which she often meets a fire woman with two babies. Her husband comforts her when she wakes up in night out of fear. In her childhood the Missionary decided that she should not go to school with the other children. She learnt to write her English name Deborah. The Missionary says that she and her mother were sinners. Akua met Asamoah when she traveled to Kumasi to trade. They both decided to marry. But the Missionary

didn't accept for their marriage. The Missionary says the story of Akua's mother, that Abena would not repent. He also accepted that he accidentally drowned her when he tried to baptise her. He then burnt her body. He gives her the black stone which Abena had. Akua left the Missionary. In Edweso during the war, Akua finds that she is pregnant. Her mother-in-law Nana Serwah, wants to keep her in a separate hut until she gets cured from the nightmare. Nana takes care of her other two children. After the end of the war Asamoah returned home but he lost his leg. One night she again saw the fire woman in her dream. The next morning the villagers accuses her for killing her children by burning the hut. Asamoah says that he could only save one child, that is Yaw, the new born boy. The crowd yelled at her and they called her crazy woman. The fire woman who came in her dream was the motif of Maame, who set fire to the village to escape, after giving birth to Effia. Akua's chapter shows the deadly effects of colonisation through the Missionary. The Missionary makes African people to adopt the culture of the colonisers.

Willie is the daughter of H and Ethe. Willie loved to sing right from her childhood. She used to sing in the union meetings and later her interest turned towards jazz. She met Robert in the union meeting of her father and they got married later. Their son was Carson. They moved to New York. Robert planned to learn a new trade and Willie planned to sing. They lived with Joecy's son Joe Turner. They searched for jobs together. Robert has lighter skin tone so he was often misrecognised as a white man. Willie was rejected by the Jazz club because of her dark skin. She faces racism. The club uses light skinned black people to sing but, she could only get a job for cleaning the Jazz club. One day her boss asked her to

clean the vomit in the men's room. Robert was the one who vomited there. White men who entered the room harassed her. Robert and Willie tried to act as if they were not known to each other. But Robert at one point of time could not control his emotions and yelled at the men. Then they say that Robert is fired. Robert says that he won't return and he leaves. Willie refused the marriage proposal by Joe. She meets a man named Eli, who is a poet in the church. She becomes pregnant with Eli's child Josephine. Eli disappears often without any information. Eli calls Carson as Sonny but she asks him to call him as Carson not as Sonny. Because Robert used to call him as Sonny. Carson likes him to be called as Sonny. One day on the road near Harlem Willie meets Robert with his new family, they smiled each other and moved. Eli's poetry book was to be published soon so he stays in his house. Willie in the choir trembles and drops her prayer book and starts singing by thinking her dead father.

Yaw was the son of Akua and Asamoah. He works as a history teacher in a Roman Catholic school in Takoradi. He was writing a book title Africans Own Africa. He speaks a lot about revolution and independence to his friend Edward. Through this chapter Gyasi speaks about history. Yaw asks his students to speak about the scars which he had throughout his body. Each one gave different explanation. Through this he thought his students that history have many different accounts. And says that whoever has power to write, documents their account of history. Gyasi says that history was constructed by the privileged one and she wants her readers to know the alternative stories. Yaw fell in love with a girl Oseim, but she says that she could not marry her by thinking that Yaw's scars would inherit and

she may have ugly children. Edward convinced him to have a house girl so he appoints Esther. After five years he realised that he was in love with Esther. With Esther, he travels to Edweso to meet his mother. Yaw's scars made others to look at him strangely. With the help of Kofi Poku he finds his mother. The villagers say that his mother would not sleep and don't like mornings. The next evening Kofi took Esther and Yaw to Akua's house. Akua says that her dreams had come true. Yaw became angry when his mother touched his scar. He asks his mother about the history behind his scars and learns about her past. She says about her long lasting dreams where she meets the firewoman, who was an ancestor and the person who once owned the black stone which passed on to generations. A fetish priest says of the evil in their lineage. Akua apologised for the sufferings which Yaw suffered. Yaw rejects his mother because of the harm she made her. Yaw thinks that he has overcome his mother's impact by leaving his village and acknowledging that he will never fully understand what happened to him as a child. He accepts his mother's true love when he comes to know the real story from his mother.

Sonny's chapter begins as the parallel of Yaw's story. He was reading *The Souls of Black* book for the fifth time when he was in jail. He wants to go back to Africa. He worked for the NAACP on the housing team and interviewed many people regarding their living condition in the Harlem. Willie gets upset whenever Sonny was arrested and beaten at many marches. This chapter examines how the segregation laws in America constitute state sanctioned racism. Sonny hadn't finished a single year of schooling, so he couldn't get a proper job. He meets

Amani Zulema when he works in Jazzmine. Even after a generation Jazz remains an important cultural art during the time of Sonny. Sonny had three children by three different women. Again she meets Amani after three months. He says that her real name was Mary and she took the name Amani when she came for singing by knowing that her name means harmony. Amani takes her to the place where she lives, Sonny finds that she was a dope fiend. Later Sonny too practiced dope and couldn't get off it. Sonny went to his mother's house with a bag of dope in his shoe. His sister Josephine was angry with him but his mother gives him food. Willie speaks to him about his father. He had three children who he hardly knows, so he doesn't know Sonny too. Willie was upset because of Sonny even more than her husband. Willie gives money to Sonny and asked him to take it and move but he stayed with her.

Marjorie is the daughter of Yaw and Esther. She often travels from America to Ghana to meet her grandmother Akua. She doesn't feel fully Ghanaian or American which is clearly seen with her encounter with a boy in the Cape Coast Castle when he speaks to her in English, and she replies him in Twi. She got her first period while staying in Ghana and her grandmother celebrated womanhood. Marjorie returns to Alabama for joining a high school. Other girls in her class mocks her for her British accent. This shows the legacy of colonialism. Mrs. Pinkston, one of her teacher helps her in defining her own identity. She meets a boy named Graham, whose family just moved from Germany to Alabama. Mrs. Pinkston was preparing for a black cultural event at her school called "The Waters We Wade In". Marjorie and Graham enjoys their after school hours by traveling to

places together. She proclaims that she is afraid of fire when he lights a cigarette that was because of the stories of her grandmother. Their relationship documents some of the progress that the society has gone through, which was not experienced by Robert and Willie in the previous chapters. Yaw gets a call from Ghana, saying that Akua's condition is serious. She read the poem in her school's black cultural event which was about the waters, sand, wind, air, Cape Coast Castle, slavery and her black identity. Akua died in Ghana. She wanted to be buried on a mountain overlooking the sea. Marjorie cries when she realises that she forgot to drop the poem in her grandmother's coffin. Her tears highlight how she values her family, particularly her grandmother. "Me Mam-ye, me Maame. Me Mam-ye, me Maame." (283) She cries for the first mother in the novel Maame.

Marcus's chapter is the final chapter of the novel. Marcus was the son of Sony and Amani. He was afraid of water. Sony explains that black people didn't like water because they were brought to America in slave ships. He went to a pool party with his friend Diante and felt uncomfortable near the water, His friend was searching for a girl whom he met at an art museum once. Marcus was perusing his Ph.D. in sociology at Stanford University in California. He was ignoring his research because it became more complex while dealing with convict leasing system that his great-grandfather H had been subject to. Marcus meets Marjorie in the gallery night and Afro-Caribbean dance party with the girl whom Diante is searching for. Soon they became friends. They revealed their fear for water and fire. They travelled to Pratt City for Marjorie's research on African and African American literature. They met a blind man who knows H. They travelled to Cape Coast Castle

in Ghana. The tour guide explains the places in Cape Coast Castle. Their return remembers the chapters of Effia and Esi who lived in the Castle in two different places. Marcus's anxiety about being in the dungeon relates to a heritage of associations with Esi who was trapped in the dungeon. Marjorie hesitates to go near the fire while few men were cooking fish near the ocean. But she joins him near the water's edge. They both helped each other in overcoming their anxieties. This relates to Effia and Esi in a way that Effia was born on a fire night and Esi was taken as a slave in a slave ship. Their generation inherits the same fear which Effia and Esi had. And now with the meeting of Marcus and Marjorie the inheritance of fear comes to an end at the Cape Coast Castle. Marjorie runs to the water and asks Marcus to join her. She takes off the black necklace and places it around Marcus's neck. She says welcome home and swims back to the shore. The suffering faced by Esi's descendants are due to the loss of the black stone given by her mother Maame. This made her descendants to be detached from the culture and family heritage. Marjorie and Marcus are not aware of the fact how their blood is closely related. When Marcus gets the stone from Marjorie the lost cultural heritage and family bonding is regained.

The novel *Homegoing* looks like a collection of short stories, because of the arrangement of chapters and the unique story line followed in each chapters. Each chapter focuses on different kind of sufferings related to slavery and loss of identity. It also deals with complex history of both Africa and America. Each character tries to come out of the trauma but only final generation wins it. The next chapter deals with the inheritance of trauma of slavery.

Chapter Three

Symbols – Trauma of Slavery

Freedom is the birth right of every human being born in this world. Every human born in the earth has freedom to lead their life according to their will and wish. Freedom is a fundamental right that every human possesses from birth to death. The changing material needs and the need for power made men to dominate their fellow human beings and ill treat them based on their colour, race, community and religion. As a result of domination the people were treated as slaves. The life of slaves brings out inhuman sufferings and pain that evokes empathy among people. They lose their identity, freedom and work hard to uplift their family. The sufferings and pain endured by people as slaves are portrayed to the world through literary works. This portrayal shows the basic need to value mankind. The life of slaves and the effects of slavery can be well traced through Yaa Gyasi's novel *Homeroising* that depicts how mankind should be valued. Through this novel Gyasi shows how slavery has affected the lives of the people of almost seven generations. Thereby she focuses the hardships faced by African-American people in the western society. The physical punishment and mental sufferings endured by the slaves due to slavery is expressed by Gyasi in a realistic way in the novel.

Yaa Gyasi's novel *Homeroising* brings into light the hardships experienced by the African people as slaves in the western society. Gyasi uses characters that have been subjected to such oppression. Their oppressors, subjugated the native African people to benefit their own gain through use of institutions like education,

religion, law-enforcement and slavery. Michael Omolewa explains in his article “Educating the ‘Native,’” that the English colonisers had pushed Euro-centered ideals and culture that were “ill-suited and irrelevant” to African people (269). Furthermore, Africans had grumbled as they noticed new values like “intolerance, hatred, ‘cutthroat competition,’ disharmony, pride, arrogance, and even cheating” (269). Beyond the physical exploitation of black people throughout slavery, Melissa Harris Perry explains the stereotypes that stemmed from it that persist to this day in her book, *Sister Citizen*. She claims the origin of the Jezebel stereotype as an excuse for white slave owners to sexually exploit their black slaves. Though the plight of African-American life is portrayed in literary works, their sufferings continue.

The multiplicity of African-American life represented in the rich literary tradition offers varied stories of black life, but is often met with disdain or skepticism by a white critical position inclined to praise only that which it finds universal. The novel *Homegoing* covers the struggle of people who were slaves for seven generations. The effects of slavery can be well traced through the characters of Esi Asare and her following generations, one of the Maame’s descendants who is the central character in the novel. The characters of Esi’s generations are Ness Stockham, Kojo Freeman, H, Willie, Carson Clifton nicknamed Sonny and Marcus Clifton.

Effia was born the night “a fire raged through the woods just outside her father’s compound,” a fire that lasted for multiple days. The fire was set by Effia’s mother Maame in order for her to escape her enslavement. The impact of this fire,

or slavery what it symbolises, was immense. Jeffrey Prager indicates that “[t]raumatic experiences live beyond those who are the direct recipients,” (18) the fire, or the trauma of the capture, rape and enslavement it symbolises, was so traumatic that its trauma would be passed down through the generations. Though Cobbe believes that this fire would haunt future generations, he tells his wife that they “will never again speak of what happened today,” (3). attempting to repress this trauma.

Effia experiences the beginning stages of colonialism when she lives at the Castle for a longer period of time. Whenever Effia tries to talk about fables of Anansi the spider and other folklore, James gets visibly uncomfortable. He speaks of “voodoo” and “black magic”, and Effia states that: “the need to call this thing “good” and this thing “bad,” this thing “white” and this thing “black,” was an impulse that [she] did not understand” (21). The white men see himself as above all black people.

Effia’s grandson James has experienced the effects that being a slave trader has had on his father Quey, the unhappiness that his work and political marriage brought him, and is desperate to escape from his family history as slave traders in an attempt to break free from the transmission of trauma that takes place. James, here, is attempting to break free from the cycle of traumatic transmission that occurs within his family by stepping away from the slave trade and leading a simpler life. However, he later learns that he cannot break from the past entirely, as the transmission of traumas from this past will continue to haunt his family line. In *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, Rebecca Shumway

claims that “many African societies faced the constant threat of an outbreak of violence, as did Africans living in slave communities in the Americas during the eighteenth century, because of the inherently violent nature of slavery and slave trading” (15). This was something very present in *Homegoing* since Effia’s descendants lived with the fear of being attacked by other tribes and sold into slavery, while Esi actually lived that attack.

Esi’s situation in the Cape Coast Castle dungeon begins a long line of brutality that both she and her descendants experience, as a result of the slave trade. The women are treated like animals in the dungeons. Her experience in the dungeon demonstrates how dejected the women have become in the dungeon when they ask the other women to endure sexual violation so that everyone can be spared from such violence. There was an abrupt shift in social status in Esi’s chapter. She, the daughter of a Big Man and brought up by her own mother unlike Effia was expected to have a better life until she is taken into slavery. Effia and Esi, being half-sisters couldn’t meet each other throughout their life time lived as a proof to the story, which was said by Abronoma. The slavery made the half-sisters as strangers.

By comparing the horrors of slavery to Hell, Gyasi demonises the slaving industry and those involved. Ness, born a slave, is the primary channel through which Gyasi illustrates the life of a slave. Fanon argues that the white people consider themselves above black people is relevant when Ness recalls a memory in which her mother was beaten when their master caught her for teaching Ness the Twi language. Gyasi describes Ness’s life at the first plantation as, “In Hell, the

sun scorched cotton so hot it almost burned the palms of your hands to touch it. Holding those small white puffs almost felt like holding fire, but God forbid you let one drop. The Devil was always watching," (74). The metaphor of Hell emphasises the brutal conditions and treatment that Africans were subjected to. Gyasi is trying to demonstrate that slaves work on a literal Hell on Earth. By referring to the plantation owner as the Devil, she illustrates the fear that the slave masters instilled into them. The relationship between the slaves and slave master is furthered by the Ness's fear, as "the Devil shows no mercy...[Ness] is beaten until the whip snaps off her back like pulled taffy...some nights, they feared that the Devil is watching them as they lie," (81). The gruesome diction displays the savagery, that white people inflicted to their slaves is something that has not been forgotten in the black community. Ness realises that "You can't raise a baby in Hell" and starts to form a plan to escape (85). Motherhood for black women is a means of producing more slaves for their white masters, and marriage is the "reasons of insurance" rather than the "joining of two families" (20,67). The lighter-skinned black women are at the house not only to do house chores, but to function as an object of lust for their white masters. Ness cannot live up to this performance, however. She has scars throughout her entire body, as she defied her previous master when smuggling her son from the plantation. The punishment to which Ness and Sam are subjected to, is extremely brutal. When Sam is hanged, "the Devil lifted [her head] for her. He made her watch. He made them all watch: the rope come out, the tree branch bend, the head snap free from body" (87). This image will continue to haunt Ness for the rest of her life, just like the permanent scars on her back will always physically represent her traumas.

Kojo Freeman, Ness's son had escaped from slave land but still suffered due to slavery. He was not completely free though his very name signifies that he was free. Though he has forged free papers, his life is threatened by the new law, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Kojo and his wife Anna had seven children which they named in alphabetical order ending in letter G. Ann and her children have their original free papers. It was essential for his family members to carry the papers that they were made free by the slave owners. This shows how a paper was considered as a symbol of freedom for the African slaves in the western society. Kojo lost his wife as she was found without papers in the street. When Anna was captured she was carrying their eighth child which they named H earlier. Though Kojo had no physical punishment experienced by the slaves he underwent emotional sufferings by losing his wife and his unborn baby H. He had a firm determination to bring up his children by knowing the sacrifice of his parents who did not escape from slavery instead they made their son escape from slavery. Kojo's love and gratitude for his parents can be considered as a symbol of obedience after realising the sacrifice of his parents. This shows how the slaves though separated from their family had a bond inseparable through their love, feelings and emotions. He made their children learn only English as the African-Americans in the western society faced societal pressures to merge with the western culture by giving up their own culture. Kojo's denial of native language to his children shows the extent of the impact of slavery in his life. Despite the lack of personal recollection of slavery, Kojo's life is haunted by the traumas of slavery and is unable to escape it, even without having direct ties to his ancestors.

H was, “once slave, once free, now slave again” (162), for he was born slave (since his mother was kidnapped while he was still in the womb), became free, and later became a slave again in the mines. His becoming slave again was the result of a micro-aggression: he was thought to have been “studyin’ a white woman” (158), and although H claimed that he did not do it, he was answered “don’t matter if you was or wasn’t. All they gotta do is say you was” because “white folks can’t stand the sight of [H] . . . nobody want to see a black man . . . walkin’ proud as a peacock” (158). Additionally, after being freed and joining a union of workers from the mines, H exposed the reality of the situation of black people after making clear that the black and white people get different sentences for the same crime of killing a man. This is a clear example of police profiling. Gyasi also displays this mistreatment of police through the violent details in the chapter following H’s life through his time in prison and freedom. Gyasi depicts his arrest as:

. . . ten men who had been chained to him on the train ride there . . . he saw a boy no older than twelve...he looked like he would melt down into a puddle of wet . . . he’d probably never seen a whip like the one the boss pit had . . . only heard about them in nightmarish stories his parents told him (160).

The chain and the whip are synonymous with the torturous aspects of slavery. Through this imagery, Gyasi alludes to the fact that even though slavery was banished, the criminal justice system still permitted the same oppression in practice. The fearful diction also demonstrates the traumatised feelings of the African-American community as a whole, due to the “nightmarish stories” his parents lived through. While serving his sentence H receives the physical side-

effects of slavery since he is constantly whipped and scarred; which after an exchange with a white man calling him out for them, he knew “he couldn’t go back to the free world, marked as he was” (167). The situation in the mine is described by Gyasi as:

H shoveled some fourteen thousand pounds of coal, all while stooped down low, on his knees, stomach, sides. And when he and the other prisoners left the mines, they would always be coated in a layer of black dust, their arms burning, just burning. Sometimes H thought that burning pain would set the coal on fire, and they would all die there, from the pain of it. But, he knew, it wasn’t just pain that could kill a man in the mine. More than once, a prison warden had whipped a miner for not reaching the ten-ton quota (161).

These scars would be common on slaves as well, illustrating further the continuity of slavery following its legal death. The disillusioned tone also indicates the knowledge that had become common for many blacks at the time, that freedom was not yet truly here. Though the white man gave laborious work H showed his concern for the co-worker by doing his work as he was weak to perform job in the mine. This marks the helping attitude of H towards fellow human beings though he underwent unbearable physical pain due to his work. The mine makes H weaker even he stopped working there. Willie, the daughter of H explains her dad’s health condition, that:

. . . he almost never stopped coughing, and sometimes when he coughed a string of black mucus would escape his mouth, his face would contort, and his eyes bulge out, so that it looked to Willie as though some invisible man

were behind him, hands wrapped around the large trunk of his thick neck, choking him (204).

As a continuation of slavery Willie's story deals with the segregation of black and white people. The segregation is even more evident when Willie gets a cleaning job at the Morrisises,

. . . a wealthy black family who lived on the southern edge of Harlem. The family had not yet resigned themselves to their own blackness, so they crept as close to the white folks as the city would allow. They could go no further, their skin too dark to get an apartment just one street down (171).

Willie, who is a great singer and always wished to sing professionally, also tries to get a job as one at a jazz club, but she is told that she is "too dark" (173). She does get a cleaning job at the jazz club, but after another incident with Robert, who has been pretending to be a white man and works there as well, both are fired from their job, and they finally split up. She and her children moved from apartment to apartment as she found it difficult to earn their livelihood and this situation made her not to provide proper education to her children. These incidents bring into light how Willie had to sacrifice her aspiration on the grounds of her complexion. Real talent had no value and encouragement in Willie's life and migration made its foot print indicating the loss of home.

Willie's son Sonny tries to fight the continuing inequality of African-Americans and their lack of safety by working for the NAACP, but unfortunately becomes addicted to heroin. As is pointed out in the novel, this drug is heavily

associated with the poor layers of society, which at this time mostly meant the African-American community: "Harlem and heroin. Heroin and Harlem. Sonny could no longer think of one without thinking of the other" (257). Sonny became addicted to dope unable to face the societal pressures of dark complexion and lack of education. As a result, Willie was worried that it was her mistake of parenting in such a way but actually the social situation made him fall victim to dope. The recovery of Sonny was through his mother Willie's explanation of all the sufferings and pain that was inflicted upon them as the consequences of slavery.

Besides looking at the influence of slavery on black people in America, Marcus is driven by "the need for studying and knowing his family more intimately (290)". When trying to imagine his family, "he would sometimes imagine a different room, a fuller family," even going all the way back to "a hut in Africa" (290). Sonny passed his knowledge about black histories to Marcus, the one he calls as alternative history lesson, which is prove to be true when he attends college. Sonny's lecture makes Marcus become successful in school until he has a chance to get a Ph.D. degree, it also has negative impact towards Marcus. It has been the toil of people of seven generations to get education though freedom prevailed only in terms of law. The research pursued by Marcus about the previous generations of African-American people shows how his own African culture was lost due to the blending with the western culture. It also explains the significance of his own culture that was unknown to him due to the impact of slavery. Marcus's research of his own culture and heritage revealed how slavery had affected their culture and heritage. It was pathetic to note how generation after generation slavery played a

cruel role in subjugating one's own liberty and basic human rights. He learns about unjust treatments befallen African-Americans since young age. He becomes really aware that his skin colour can endanger him, as black people are often seen as a threat to the white society. This need to trace roots back to Africa is what make him connect very strongly to Marjorie, whom he meets at a party. In Ghana, they visit the Cape Coast Castle, unaware of how their families both have historical connections to this former slave fortress.

The educational gap between whites and blacks in *Homegoing* displays the advantages given to white people that are not given to blacks. This discrepancy was largely due to the segregation that was prevalent and legal in America. Karen Benjamin in his article, "Suburbanizing Jim Crow", explains that this discrepancy in schooling was done intentionally by lawmakers, particularly in Raleigh, North Carolina. The local governance had protected elite white neighborhoods by placing restrictions on where African-Americans could move to, then equipped the white neighborhoods with newer, better schools. Gyasi displays these discrepancies when Sonny is visiting a white school as:

Sonny looked at the pristine building, clean and shiny, with smartly dressed white children entering and exiting as calmly as can be, he'd thought his own schools, the ones in Harlem that had the ceiling falling in and smelled of some unnamable funk, and he was surprised that both things could even be called 'schools' . . . Sonny said he didn't mind his schools because he never went, and Willie said the fact that he never went was what was wrong with them (249).

The juxtaposition between the “clean and shiny” white school with the black one that had “ceilings falling in” and an “unnamable funk” display the unmistakable inconsistencies in the education system benefits the rich white kids. Sonny’s surprised reaction furthers this juxtaposition as he would not even put the two in the same category. His school failed to even give him reason to attend, which sets him up for little hope of economic mobility. Many African-Americans are caught in this cycle of poverty brought on behind the shadows of intentional segregation that remain prevalent in residency.

Gyasi portrays Christianity as yet another instrument of structurally oppressing the African people. The true intention of the British in spreading Christianity is to control. The emptiness of Christian forgiveness is furthered by the missionary’s murder of Akua’s mother, Abena. The missionary drowned her in an attempt of baptism,

I took her to the water to be baptized. She didn’t want to go, but I—I forced her. She thrashed as I carried her through the forest to the river. She thrashed as I lowered her down into the water. She thrashed and thrashed and thrashed, and then she was still. I only wanted her to repent (189).

This gruesome detail displays the evil qualities of the missionary, forcing his own religion on her against her will. Ironically, he breaks a tenant of his own religion “Thou shall not kill,” while performing a sacrament of Christianity (Exodus 20:13). It also demonstrates that the true reason for spreading Christianity was not to offer salvation to the Africans, but to use it as a way to control their lives. Following her drowning, the missionary burned her corpse and her belongings, while pleading for

his God to forgive him. This directly coincides with what Yaw was alluding to in his summation of Christian forgiveness. The white people were using this term as a way to rid themselves of the guilt and Hell in the afterlife. This displays that Christianity was a way for the British to try to better control the mind and spirit of the African people, which makes them easier to exploit.

Another way the English oppressed the Ghanaians is through their use of their own language. Ness got her name from the word “My Goodness! . . . because those had been the only English words to escape Esi’s mouth without her struggling to find them, . . . so that goodness had turned into, simply, Ness” (71). Gyasi portrays, how the slaves are forced to give up their own language and made to speak the new language, English by the slave owners. Gyasi illustrates the class associations and discomfort with speaking English. She expresses the discomfort of speaking English by Africans through Esi, Ness and Esther. The eased diction demonstrates how anxious and uncomfortable Esther was to speak her spotty English to Yaw. She was ashamed it would reveal her low education and economic levels. Charles Owu Ewie explains in his article, *“The Language Policy of Education in Ghana”*, Ghana made English the official language of learning in May 2002, which infringes on their linguistic human rights (79). This adoption of English demonstrates legacy of the continuity of the systematic oppression.

Through colonialism, imperialism, and slavery, Africans were forced into a world shaped by white people for white people. African-Americans feel helpless after hundreds of years of this oppression, as Gyasi points out throughout *Homegoing*. Gyasi covered the struggle of seven generations but still the question

of freedom remains incomplete. The evolution of freedom from slavery was seen only in terms of escape from physical punishment and pain. But all the characters in the novel also suffer mentally as slaves by losing their native culture, heritage and language. *Homegoing* illustrates the institutions that white culture has set up were meant to exploit Africans and African-Americans alike. Gyasi gave voice to events and feelings that were deemed unspeakable through the literature of slavery. Gyasi also makes clear that slavery ended but still it left its indelible effects on a stronger basis in the minds of the characters in the novel. It existed in terms of colour complexion, race, and religion. The next chapter deals with the assimilation of Culture, heritage and identity due to slavery and oppression.

Chapter Four

Assimilation of New Culture

Culture presupposes collectivity. An individual cannot form a culture no matter how long he/she stays in one particular place, because culture is expressed in groups of people living together. Culture has been defined in many ways by anthropologists, sociologists, and other social scientists. During the twentieth century, the famous definition of culture formulated by Taylor was very influential, because it covered a wide range of cultural elements. According to Taylor,

Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society" (15). In the 1982 UNESCO Conference on Culture and Development held in Mexico, culture was defined as the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. The definition included not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

Culture is transmitted through the process of socialisation, where the elements of culture are passed from one generation to the next. According to Habana-Hafner, "new generations learn the cultural 'agreements' from generations preceding them; once these agreements are internalised, external reinforcements are no longer necessary" (11). Through socialisation, individuals develop a culturally-defined world-view and sense of identity.

In *Homegoing*, Gyasi has portrayed how European colonisation and slavery

has destroyed many families, indigenous culture, heritage, identity, religion, customs and tradition of Ghana through their powerful dominance. Gyasi has very skillfully brought forth to limelight, how colonisation has very subtly altered and deteriorated the native culture and customs of Akan people over a long span of time. She also examines how each character experiences culture shock in their native land as well as in America as a result of cross culture and cultural differences.

Effia is married to James Collins, the British Governor of the Cape Coast Castle. The black stone, which Effia gets before her marriage was left by her biological mother and given to her by her step mother, stands as the symbol of one's connection with one's family, culture and heritage. Young girls were taken from their families as a way for the colonisers to ensure the loyalty of the tribe. Effia's marriage takes place in a chapel at Cape Coast Castle. Yaa Gyasi writes:

. . . she and James Collins were married by a clergyman who had asked Effia to repeat words she didn't mean in a language she didn't understand. There was no dancing, no feasting, no bright colors, slicked hair, or old ladies with wrinkled and bare breasts throwing coins and waving handkerchiefs (16).

Effia's marriage takes place as a Christian ritual, without following the Akan tradition. This shows, how her native culture slowly gets assimilated by the western culture due to colonization.

The girls, who were forced to marry white men like Effia were forced to adopt a new identity as black wives of white men or "wenches" (19) as the British

soldiers of the Cape Coast Castle in *Homegoing* called them. It was “a word the soldiers used to keep their hands clean so that they would not get in trouble with their god” (19) since they already had a wife back in England. This new “wench” was given sometimes a new name and this was the first step to strip them of their identity. As is the case of Eccoah, whose husband wants to call her Emily because he “cannot pronounce [her] name well” (24), or the case of “Millicent’s mother” who “had been given a new name by her white husband” (9). While Effia is in the Castle, she is told by Eccoah that, her husband wants to call her Emily and she is answered by another wench: “if he wants to call you Emily, let him call you Emily . . . Better that than that to listen to him butcher your mother tongue over and over” (24). By not “butchering” their language they are allowing their own selves, their identity, to be butchered. The Britishers use of English names over their native names denotes how these men rob the native women’s sense of cultural identity associated with their name.

When Effia has trouble in getting pregnant, Adwoa Aidoo her Fante friend in the Castle offers her some strange roots to hide it under bed before consummating. When James discovers the root, he utters, “Now Effia, I don’t want any voodoo or black magic in this place. My men can’t hear that I let my wench place strange roots under the bed. It’s not Christian” (23). James Collins by using the phrase ‘not Christian’ to mean ‘not good’ which exhibits his belief in white supremacy as he considers his religion and culture are superior to that of the native culture and religion. Gyasi here brings forth how Ghanaian individuals experience cultural shock even in their native land as they are surrounded by men

of dominant culture.

Esi loses her black stone when she was grabbed by a soldier from the dungeon to the slave ship. Esi is forcibly transported to another continent, without any family around her. The loss of black stone foreshadows the loss of her culture and heritage in the foreign land experienced by her descendants.

The Englishmen would have children who, besides having an English name and not a native one, as Millicent, who was the “half-caste daughter of a Fante woman and a British soldier” (9). They would inherit the struggle for an identity, as is the case of Quey: “he was one of the half-caste children of the Castle, and like the other half-caste children, he could not fully claim either half of himself, neither his father’s whiteness nor his mother’s blackness. Neither England nor the Gold Coast” (56). This shows how biracial children experience anxiety, stress, discomfort and confusion, due to their cross culture which is an outcome of forced imposition of imperial culture in the natives. Quey does not have a unique identity and, in fact, he thinks he has “neither” of them. Quey is in conflict with identity because he does not know how to define himself. He feels neither English nor African. Though the Castle is in Ghana it is dominated by Europeans and their culture, so when Quey steps out of the Castle for the first time to visit his friend Cudjo’s village, he experiences culture shock in his own native. This happens due to the appearance of the village which is new to him, where “There was not even one white person there, no soldiers to say what one could or could not do” (56). The biracial children like Quey are raised in a manner they are always beneficial to the British. Quey was sent to England for higher studies. The Britishers sending

their children to England will make them adopted to the new culture. Their offspring forget their native culture and language and gets assimilated to the western culture. The biracial children like Quey are raised in a manner they are always beneficial to the British.

Another name that is taken is Ness's, for Esi had called her Maame, like her mother, before their master found out. It is because the master in the plantation, found it out that Esi was lashed until she gave Ness a different English name. Since the only thing that came out of her was "[m]y goodness!" (71), that was the name that her daughter was given: Ness. In that case, it was a process of assimilation that slaves had to go through. Gyasi portrays how the slaves were forced to speak the colonisers language and thereby shows how Akan culture is slowly eroded on the face of the British domination. The Britishers not only claim that English is superior to Twi. They rob their family heritage, culture and African identity through violence and power.

Ness attending church indicates her assimilation to the western culture. She sings a song in Twi language in the church, without knowing that it was her mother tongue. This shows how far she is removed from her native culture and language due to westernisation. Gyasi, here, hits the painful reality that these slaves are not only separated from their loving family but also forcibly removed from their cultural identity and heritage related with one's family.

Nana Yaa, the mother of James used to yell at Quey, "James Richard Collins! What kind of Akan are you that you give your son three white names?" (90). For which Quey would reply, "And so what? . . . Will he not still be a prince to our people

and to the whites too? I have given him a powerful name" (90). This shows the role of cross culture in gaining power. Quey believed that being the grandson of Asante king as well as having an English name will make James more powerful. The blending of native culture with that of western culture often ends up in the swallowing up of the indigenous culture by powerful western culture. First, it was James Collins who worked as a slave trader, then Quey, who accepted it as burden and as "sacrifices [that] had to be made" (69), and later James's work, although he is the one who breaks the chain and runs away to escape and be his "own nation" (107), that is his own self with his own identity. Effia gives him the black stone, when he was about to leave the village. The passing of black stone denotes the passing of one's culture and heritage from one generation to another.

Kojo escaped slavery and suffers due to identity crisis. He named his seven children whose names begins from A to G. Then unborn child is named H. Kojo always gets nervous at the sight of the police who often enquire black men. This constant fear and anxiety in foreign land is an outcome of the difference in race and culture he experiences there. Through H's name, Gyasi emphasises the loss of connection with his family and Akan culture. H's incomplete name indicates the loss of cultural identity and heritage. In the same way, Ethe, H's girlfriend expresses her anger towards H after he calls her by the name of another woman: "[a]in't just about everything I ever had been taken away from me? My freedom. My family. My body. And now I can't even own my name?" (175). Although Ethe and H do not live during the time that slavery was active, her speech reflects the importance of having a name that gives own identity.

Abena went to Kumasi, the capital of Asante with her childhood friend Ohene Nyarko. There a white man approaches her and tells, "We are trying to build churches throughout the Asante region. Please, come find us if you ever need us." (141). Abena left immediately as she believed that white man usually caused trouble. James gave her a black stone pendent of his grandmother Effia with which she sets out for missionary church in Kumasi after Ohene breaks his promise of marrying her. This shows how Christianity started spreading in Akan nations destroying their native religion, customs and practices.

Akua, experienced assimilation with names when she was given the English name Deborah, by the Missionary. In her case it was not a relationship between an empowered master and his slave but one of "student/teacher, heathen/savior" (185). The problem with names, as erasers of identity, continues within the descendants of Esi. Akua suffered a lot to learn her English name. Gyasi portrays how Christianity is imposed on the natives forcibly and how the colonisers devalued the native religion and customs. The utterance of these words, "All people on the black continent must give up their heathenism and turn to God. Be thankful that the British are here to show you how to live a good and moral life" (184) by the Missionary shows how the colonisers believed that, it was their responsibility to save the heathens. So that, they can impose their religion and culture on the natives. When Abena speaks about her wish to marry Asamoah the Missionary says:

They called him a fetish man because he was, because he had not given up praying to the ancestors or dancing or collecting plants and rocks and

bones and blood with which to make his fetish offerings. He had not been baptized. She knew he was supposed to be wicked (181).

This shows how the colonisers instilled negative opinion on the natives regarding their own religion and cultural practices of their ancestors. When Abena comes to know that the Missionary accidentally killed her mother Abena while baptizing, she realised that her mother is not a Christian as told by Missionary. This shows how Christianity was forcibly imposed on the natives over their native religion and culture.

Yaw, the only surviving child of Akua works as a history teacher. When he meets Akua, he asks her to tell him “the story of how I got my scar,” to which she replies: “How can I tell you the story of your scar without first telling you the story of my dreams? And how do I talk about my dreams without talking about my family? Our family?” (240). Even though Akua had grown up without her family, she has gained a lot of family knowledge over the years, finally learning herself that the “firewoman was an ancestor come back to visit me.” She also tells Yaw that this ancestor is the one to whom “the black stone had belonged to,” the black stone necklace, that was passed down through all these generations. Akua realises that this black stone is a connection to their family’s ancestral heritage, which she is finally able to share with her son.

Willie couldn’t get job in the Harlem because of her black identity. But the American society convince Robert, her husband to convince others that he is white by giving up his black identity to blend easily with Americans. At the end of Willie’s chapter, Gyasi, shows how she creates her own new sense of African-American

culture and identity. She found empowerment through singing in church.

As Quey feels neither English nor African, Sonny is confused and does not know whether he is African or American or both. Both Quey and Sonny are shaping their hybrid identity. McLeod says, an identity is “never total and complete” and is always “in motion, pursuing errant and unpredictable routes” (148). Sonny says, “in America the worst thing you could be was a black man” (260). This shows how Sonny is affected because of his black identity in America. Sonny gets addicted to drugs. “Harlem and heroin. Heroin and Harlem. Sonny could no longer think of one without the thinking of the other. They sounded alike” (257). It shows how the African-Americans used drugs to cope with the biased American laws, its oppressive system and culture shock they experience there. Sonny reproaches his wife, Amani for not being into “Back to Africa business” but still “using an African name” (255). Amani cleverly responds “[w]e can’t go back to something we ain’t never been to in the first place. It ain’t ours anymore” (255). This shows how Amani is embracing her double-identity. African-Americans had similitudes with white Americans because the first generations of Africans that arrived in America, slaves, were forced to talk, eat, and act like Americans, and same happened with later generations. Still, Amani struggled, as many others did, in creating her African-American identity.

The final result of the separation of the two sisters, Effia and Esi, is the reunion of their last descendants, Marjorie and Marcus. Both of them live in the America of the late 1990s and they were the people who know the most about their ancestry. Marjorie is told by her grandmother Akua about the story of her black

stone, of her heritage, and how “it had belonged to Old Lady and to Abena before her, and to James and Quey and Effia “the Beauty” (51) before that. On the other hand, Marcus does not get to know anything from his genealogical line before H’s story. He is working on his Ph.D. dissertation in Sociology. He had been avoiding his research because it was not going well. His research was “on the convict leasing system that had stolen years off of his great-grandpa H’s life, but the deeper into the research he got, the bigger project got” (289). During the course of his research, he realises that he could not “talk about Great-Grandpa H’s story without also talking about his grandma Willie and the millions of other black people who had migrated north, fleeing Jim Crow” (289); he does not know his real story, but he can imagine. This is why he accepts on going to Africa with Marjorie, to understand his real identity, culture and heritage.

Marjorie knows the story of her family back in Africa and her identity is entirely African. Marjorie is “not the same kind of black” as her schoolmates, in fact, she is the “wrong kind” (268). She is categorised by them as “white girl” (269) because she is not acting as any other African-American girls. The problem is that since Marjorie is black, the girls from the school and the rest of the African-American community see Marjorie as one of them, an African-American. Her teacher tells Marjorie to “talk about what being African American means to [her]” (273) to which she responds that she is not African-American. “She wanted to tell Mrs. Pinkston that she could feel herself being pulled away too, . . . too long gone from Ghana to be Ghanaian” (273). This was the portrayal of love for their own identity. Marjorie doesn’t want to give up her identity and adopt to the new identity

as an African-American.

“The day she was born, thirteen years ago, all the way across the Atlantic, her parents had mailed her umbilical cord to Old Lady so that the woman could put it into the ocean” (267). Marjorie’s grandmother requested her parents to send “something of that child back to Ghana” (267), if they ever had a child. This made Marjorie to trace her identity and embrace her culture. Marjorie’s grandmother celebrated her womanhood by clapping her hands and singing songs. No other female character in the novel experiences this kind of celebration on the day of their first period. This celebration plays a key role in Akan tradition. Marjorie’s grandmother follows their native culture without giving any space for westernisation. When Marjorie speaks to her grandmother Akua in English she insisted her to speak in Twi. Marjorie’s parents once received letter from her kindergarten teacher asking whether Marjorie knew English as she rarely speaks. From that day onwards her parents speak Twi while she answers it in English. This shows how one is forced to speak foreign language. Marjorie as a product of cross culture maintains a balance between the native and foreign language.

Marjorie gives her black stone pendent to Marcus when they visit the Cape Coast Castle indicates the restoring of lost Ghanaian culture of Esi’s lineage. Marjorie eventually tells him, “Welcome home,” and as he touches it, he is “surprised by its weight” (300). The fact that it is left ambiguous whether Marcus is surprised by how heavy or how light the stone feels is very important. The heaviness of the stone represents the centuries of trauma that are attached to it. Marcus receives the black stone in the same place where Esi had lost it. It can be

read as the release of trauma as Marjorie and Marcus, two descendants from Maame, who lost her two children, are reunited at a place that contains both of their heritages. In this sense, it might show that Marcus feels lighter as he is finally connected to the place where his family has its origins, finding peace within himself. According to Landry, the gift of the necklace signifies that Marjorie acknowledges that “she could still feel connected to her home without being physically rooted there.” Landry further argues that “Marcus’s willingness to receive the necklace represents a joining in and acceptance of the multiplicity of black identity” (144,145).

Gyasi focuses on the change of culture and identity throughout three centuries. Starting from Effia and Esi to Marjorie and Marcus. Marcus the last descendant in Esi’s lineage is the only person to travel back to his native place Ghana in trace of his identity. Culture changes with time. Gyasi expresses that one must protect their native culture by being swallowed up by foreign culture. *Homegoing* shows how the identity of black people is reshaped through generation after the trauma of slavery. The next chapter is a summation of all the previous chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

Yaa Gyasi's novel *Homegoing*, demonstrates the oppression created by colonialism, imperialism and slavery. The novel also focuses on the westernisation of culture and shaping of identity by following the family's lineage dating back from the seventeenth century to twenty first century for around two hundred and fifty years. These issues remain in memory for white culture, yet their effects are still being felt until this day in the black community.

The novel *Homegoing* deals with lineages of two African women, Effia and Esi. In Effia's entire lineage, except Marjorie every other descendant stays in Ghana. Esi's lineage continues in America after she is sold into slavery. The first two chapters are from Effia and Esi's perspective, and in the proceeding chapters the novel demonstrates the perspective of one of their children each. Both lineages are placed in different countries, one in United States and the other in Ghana. Therefore, the societal expectations are constantly changing as the cultural values shift through time and place. Works like *Homegoing* have helped to give voice to those souls that lost their voice, language, names and identities on account of the cruelties of slavery that, once ended, continued on in the form of segregation, racism and other daily micro-aggressions.

Slave trade ended, and soon slavery was done too after the Civil War (1861-1865), but the trauma endured created crisis for an identity. It was a period of reconstruction for the country, and a period of reconstruction of identity for black

people. The black people were not slaves anymore and they had to define themselves. Racism emerged, and black people were not accepted, they were not American, and after all that time, they were not African either. In *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Neil Smelser claimed that:

. . . many African American intellectuals in the late nineteenth century revived the memory of slavery as a historical blessing in the sense that, even though a trauma, it gave black Americans a positive basis for identity in a world that had revoked the post slavery promise of full citizenship by the imposition of Jim Crowism in the South and discrimination in the North (54).

As said by Du Bois, after slavery, blacks in America became a mix of African and American, and thus they created a new identity that included both, a “double-consciousness” (8), which Eyerman meant to be “both African and American, loyal to a nation, but no to its racist culture” (162).

Effia and Esi’s lives are so much contrasting. Maame was a captive when Effia was born. Effia was brought up by her father’s another wife who hates her because her real mother Maame escaped that night when she was born. Esi was born to parents of high social status who cared for her deeply. Their positions of status are reversed because of Effia being married to a slave trader and Esi being taken as a slave. This shift in their status reflects in the lives of their descendants.

Effia’s marriage takes place as a Christian ritual, without following the Akan tradition shows, how her native culture slowly gets assimilated by the western culture due to colonisation. James Collins by using the phrase ‘not Christian’ to

mean 'not good' which exhibits his belief in white supremacy as he considers his religion and culture are superior to that of the native culture and religion.

The importance of family is clear from the structure of the novel *Homegoing*. Gyasi begins the novel with the Akan proverb: "The family is like the forest: if you are outside it is dense; if you are inside you see that each tree has its own position" (xi) as a prologue. The characters in the novel are related to one another. Gyasi constructed this novel in a way that, without the family lineage each chapter would stand alone like a short story. Because each chapter deals with the life of each character separately. The characters live in the same time period in Africa and in America, but their position in their lives varies. Like Quey and Ness were the first descendants of the sisters Effia and Esi lives in Ghana and America respectively, so experience different kind of situations.

In *Homegoing*, the black stone given by Maame to her two children Effia and Esi symbolise a person's connection to his or her heritage. It shows how culture and identity is passed to the next generations. For the characters who remain in Ghana, the stone becomes a symbol of their connection to the culture. For the characters in America the stone symbolises lost culture, because many characters become disconnected from their parents and their family. Due to American slavery they feel detached from their Ghanaian heritage. In the final chapter when Marcus gets to stone from Marjorie, Esi's lineage gets back into the culture which they lost because of slavery.

Slave owners put all their effort in erasing all traces of the African identity that slaves had. They not only took their names but also their language. Whipping

was common in plantations and it was a way for masters to feel powerful over their slaves. Characters like Esi, Ness and H suffers the physical torture of being whipped by their slave owners. Their physical suffering made them get disconnected with their language, culture and identity.

Characters like Ness, Akua, and Eccoah were forced to give up their identity by changing their names. Ness gets her name from “goodness”, the only English word which Esi utters frequently. Akua gets her English name Deborah from the Missionary. He tries to make her forget about her culture and identity by hiding the identity of her mother. The problem with names which erases the identity, continues within the descendants of Esi. Even Kojo’s white boss tells him that taking away the name is the first step.

Effia’s marriage takes place in a chapel in the Cape Coast Castle in Christian tradition. This is the first place in the novel where the western culture starts to dominate the native culture. The colonisers and the slave owners were very keen in imposing their religion on the native Africans. Effia, Ness, Abena and Akua had gone through this forced imposition of religion and language.

Quey and Sonny are in conflict with their identity. They couldn’t define themselves with a person with single identity. They both are biracial. Quey feels he is neither African nor English and Sonny feels neither African nor American. Even though Quey says to his friend that he is not white, he couldn’t accept himself as black. The last descendant of Effia too couldn’t accept herself as an African-American. She wants to embrace the culture thought by her grandmother. James, wants to get rid of the identity as a slaver, escapes from his village and marries a

common girl Akosua and becomes a farmer. But he could only change his identity not the trauma which follows his descendants.

Yaw, Sonny and Marcus are the persons who have interest in knowing their history. Yaw, being a history teacher tells his students that, only people with power gets a chance to write the history. Yaw wrote a history book titled *The Ruin of a Nation Begins in the Homes of Its People*, the title was taken from an old Asante proverb and he used it to discuss slavery and colonialism. Marcus pursuing his Ph.D. in Sociology deals about the convict leasing system describes how angry his research makes him while knowing about the sufferings which his forefathers have undergone.

Gyasi foreshadows the story of the novel through the words of Abronoma. Effia and Esi couldn't meet each other. The both sides of the pond in the story said by Abronoma, symbolises Ghana and America. Effia continues to live in Ghana where Esi is taken as slave to America. Even the descendants of both the sisters couldn't meet each other. Marcus and Marjorie meets each other and travels to Ghana but they are completely unaware of their relationship. The novel's title *Homegoing* is justified when Marcus and Marjorie travels to Ghana. Marjorie gives him the stone, which passed on to seven generations. Marcus is the only person from Esi's lineage to go back to Ghana. Marjorie's poem which she read at the black cultural event in her school shows her connection to her roots in Africa as well as her extended family's experience as slaves.

In *Homegoing*, all fourteen characters present their own story and their own trauma. Slavery, the greatest horror of humankind, erased the identity of millions of

slaves in different ways, in Africa, by means of arranged marriages between British officers and native girls, by means of re-naming or by whipping one's language, and in America by inducing inhumane labour in plantations, by re-naming them, by kidnaping and reselling them into slavery and by segregating them. All these actions stripped the characters in the novel and the millions of fellow blacks, of their individuality, personalities, and identity, yet they gave them a new one, that of African-Americans.

Gyasi portrays how the effects of slavery lasted till the seventh generation descendants of Effia and Esi. Slavery affected the culture and identity of the people in Africa and America. This made them few of the descendants to adopt to new culture and identity as African-Americans. The descendants of Effia followed their own culture as they haven't gone out of Ghana. But the descendants of Esi are forced to change their culture and identity because of slavery in America. Gyasi uses the historical incidents to make her story line for three hundred years in Africa and America. The characters in the novel strived hard against slavery and oppression to shape their own identity and to follow their own culture.

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Ideological Persuasion in Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

RAJA MARIESWARI M.

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PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2021

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Enitan's Entanglement	16
Three	Unusual Friendship	30
Four	Sense and Smell of Africa	44
Five	Summation	56
	Works Cited	62

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Ideological Persuasion in Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Raja Marieswari M, during the year 2019-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Ms. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Dr. L. Jacquiline Leo

Guide

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Examiner

Principal

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Ideological Persuasion in Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

Raja Marieswari M.

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PREFACE

Sefi Atta is one of the leading contemporary women writers in Nigeria. Her works explore themes such as subordination of women, patriarchal dominance, social injustice, polygamy, gender bias, religious tolerance, racial discrimination, the desire for selfhood, freedom etc. She is an engaged writer who tackles issues on Nigerian culture and tradition.

Everything Good Will Come is her debut novel published in 2005. It redefines Nigerian feminism by presenting us with a woman character who knows what she wants. The protagonist emerges as a self reliant, emancipated, happy individual who is very confident and assertive. She is really a promise for future Nigerian feminism because she shows the ability of Nigerian woman to take her life in her own hands. She has certain principled ideological persuasions to live her life.

This project entitled **Ideological Persuasion in Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*** highlights the journey of a girl growing up in a war-torn Nigeria within the patriarchal society. Through education, she creates her own ideologies and liberates herself from all kinds of subjugation. The protagonist of the novel is the replica of the author, Sefi Atta.

The project consists of five chapters. The first chapter **Introduction** concentrates on the literary fame of Sefi Atta, her life, works, awards and achievements. It explores the rudiments of her work and the novel chosen for the study. It also throws light on the origin of African literature as well as Nigerian literature.

The second chapter **Enitan's Entanglement** deals with the entanglement which the protagonist faces, from her personal life to public life. It also presents the narrative techniques and stylistic devices employed by the writer.

The third chapter **Unusual Friendship** explores the cordial friendship between the protagonist and her childhood friend, one who is prepared to manipulate the traditional system and other who attempts to defy it.

The fourth chapter **Sense and Smell of Nigeria** focuses on the culture and traditional beliefs of Nigeria and reaction of the protagonist to her own culture.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It also validates the study.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed in the eighth Edition of the MLA Handbook for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Sefi Atta is one of the most prominent and leading contemporary women writers of Nigeria. She has established herself as one of the most engaging writers in the latest wave of Nigerian authors. Living at the different times of the year in the United States, England and Nigeria, she remains a committed writer across multiple genres. She is a prize winning novelist, playwright and screenwriter. Her books have been translated into many languages and her radio plays have been broadcast by the BBC, and her stage plays have been performed internationally.

Atta's stories are compelling and she brings artistic innovations and experimentations to bear. Her stint with the theatre also helped in enlivening her works. Atta is a bold and courageous writer who is ready to make her mark in the Nigerian literary landscape. She is an engaged writer who tackles issues of Nigerian culture and tradition. Never shying away, she demonstrates no shame in exhibiting some of the more difficult and shameful aspects of Nigerian cultural practice. She proves continuously that there are transcendent aspects of Nigerian society as she celebrates them through descriptive and poetic writing.

Atta succeeds in portraying the trials and tribulations of women. Through her writings, she champions for the emancipation and empowerment of women. Patriarchy, gender inequality, female bonding and solidarity of women are the dominant themes of her novels. She encourages women to form strong bonds with one another in order to survive patriarchal oppression, failed conjugal lives and

political disturbances. According to Atta, female bonding is essential for the survival of Black women. Her novels in particular are a modus for future prose writing in Nigeria.

Atta's novels highlight different forms of repression, exploitation and marginalisation that breed gender inequality. She gives her voice against male chauvinism and expresses her desire for the equality of both the sexes. Atta interlaces ordinary peoples' tales with everyday events. This narrative choice on the part of the writer serves to highlight the myriad ways in which Nigerian society and culture have been distorted by the negative impacts of neo-colonialism and globalisation. She does not readily accept that her writing aims to change perceptions and misconceptions of Africans by the Western world, she readily accepts that her primary audience is Nigerian, while taking into account a world audience as well.

This project is on Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*. It is a beautiful narrative that borders on the experiences of a young girl turned woman in a country struggling to find its post-independence identity. It depicts the entanglement of a woman in a conservative society. The novel surmises the experiences of Enitan and her perception of life at different stages. Enitan's first person narrative reveals the differences across class, generation, gender, faith, language, tradition and individual character. She goes through the different stages of life as a young girl with choices and decisions to make, in choosing what rules to obey, the schools to attend, the friends to have and the man to marry. It is a heartfelt drama of family, friendship, community and divided loyalties. The book is set mainly before and during the

Nigerian-Biafran war. The novel's origin could be traced back to the African literature.

The origins of modern African literature lie in the indigenous oral traditions of Africa. Africans had an indigenous literature before Europeans came to colonize the continent and the tradition continues to thrive to this moment. The indigenous literature was oral because of the non-literate nature of the traditional culture and society. African oral literature manifests in the multifarious forms like folktales, folksongs, specific types of songs and chants, myths, legends, epics, proverbs, riddles and tongue twisters. There is no clear cut division of genres of narratives, poetry and drama as in modern Western literature. It is very integrative in the sense that a good narrative involves poetic songs and chants with the minstrel wearing a mask and a special costume and performing to the accompaniment of music supplied by drums or other musical instruments.

Oral literature, as practiced by Africans, can be described as a multi-media event. This traditional literature is committed to memory and is passed by word of mouth from generation to generation. Unlike modern Western literature that demands leisure and formal education, traditional African literature is a people's literature woven into the different stages of the people's lives with specific songs for birth, naming ceremonies, initiation into different age grades, marriage and death, among others. In the communalistic society, literature in various forms helped to maintain a healthy social ethos that bound people together.

Africa is a vast continent, consisting of more than fifty nations and several hundred languages and ethnic groups. And despite many cultural similarities across the continent and a virtually ubiquitous history of imperialism and neocolonialism,

there are many African experiences and many verbal expressions of them. There is a vast production of African-language literature and oral traditions, which is largely unknown and ignored by those who are outside the continent.

During 1950s and 1960s, as nations around the continent moved more or less slowly to achieve decolonization, many Africans took up the pen. They were indeed African creative writers, as well as essayists and polemicists, who wrote in European languages well before this time. But it is in the vast, concerted literary practice of midcentury that the moment of acceleration of contemporary African literature can be situated.

African narrative and poetry were born in the era immediately preceding and following the formal declaration of independence, for the most part, in protest against the history and myths constructed in conjunction with the colonial enterprise. Writers struggled to correct false images, to rewrite fictionally and poetically the history of pre-colonial and colonial Africa and to affirm African perspectives. The implicit or explicit urge to challenge the premises of colonialism was often realized in autobiography or pseudo-autobiography.

The novel is the most dominant and most pervasive literary genre in Africa today, and correspondingly the most popular. Early African novelists mostly began writing in dialogue with themes of conflict between tradition and modernity. They used the novel to arouse in the reader a true sense of himself, thereby evoking his past and connecting it to the present. This unequivocally distinguished an African and a European writing about Africa. African novel will be better understood when appraised from its historical context in terms of reality that has shaped the

consciousness of the writers and their responses in the novels they write. This reality is therefore not static, but changes all the time.

Modern African literature adopts many oral traditional forms and troupes. Many writers use indigenous folklore such as folk tales, myths, legends, epics, folksongs, and proverbs, among so many others. Chinua Achebe uses the folktale of the greedy tortoise in *Things Fall Apart*. There are proverbs in the epics, novels, plays, and poems. The writers also adapt oral techniques in the poetry, fiction, and plays. Many poems are modeled on satiric abuse songs, dirges, and praise chants.

Understanding of African literature has changed tremendously in the last twenty years, because of several important developments. There are many ways to divide the terrain of literature written by Africans. These approaches reflect the fact that the continent is home to many different peoples and cultural practices, political and physical geographies, local and non local languages. Thus we routinely divide African literature by region, West Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Central Africa and Southern Africa, each of which is more or less distinctive environmentally and historically. African literature is also often categorized by language of expression or genre. These approaches suggest the diversity and complexity of life on the African continent.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and home of the University of Ibadan, has been a particularly important site of English-language literature. Nigerian Literature in English has witnessed an impressive expansion in more than five decades of its existence. Nigerian Literature would essentially be any Nigerian literary work of imagination which is written by Nigerians for Nigerians. It discusses issues that are Nigerian and shares the same sensibilities, consciousness, world-view and

other aspects of the Nigerian cultural experience. The writer must share values and experiences of the people of Nigeria for the writing to be classified as being Nigerian. It is obvious that what has now become Nigerian Literature was born and nursed in a hostile environment and is still a continuation of a protest against the doctrinal colonial literary heritage bequeathed on Nigerians by the whites after the abolition of slave trade.

Nigeria has produced a number of important writers including Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, Ben Okri, Femi Osofisan and others. Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* made a singular impression when it was published in London in 1952. Tutuola's adventurous tale and hero are virtually lifted from the repertoire of Yoruba oral traditions and placed on the page in effective but non-literary English. The combination of rich imagination and untutored language gives the work a freshness and originality that garnered critical acclaim and stirred great debates about African writers and writing.

Nigerian literature in particular, especially its prose fiction reveals a form of resistance to the colonial encounter in its examination of the challenges that cropped up after the attainment of independence. The failings of the post-colonial nation state, neo-colonialism, globalization and all the issues that arise from it, are evident in the Nigerian writers engagement with the present times. These writers are creating fictional narratives out of historical facts and representing the lived experiences of the people. The construction of these narratives from Nigeria's turbulent and oppressive history can be traced in the works of first-generation writers such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and, also, in the works of the writers who came after them. There are obvious differences in style and focus, but the nation has remained at the heart of the Nigerian writer's literary concerns.

In 1958, Chinua Achebe published what has come to date the most widely read African novel, *Things Fall Apart*. Achebe retells the initial moment of colonialism, the encounter between the Igbo and the British, from the perspective of the colonized. In this novel and in *Arrow of God*, which treats a later moment of the colonial period, he constructs an African voice and subject, denied by the literature of empire and colonialism. His *No Longer at Ease*, *Man of the People*, and *Anthills of the Savannah* focuses on the corruption and contradiction of life in the post-independence era. Achebe is also an essayist and short-story writer.

Nigeria's 1986 Noble laureate for literature, Wole Soyinka, is specially known as a playwright and poet, although he has written several novels, memoirs and essays. Soyinka's work is rooted in Yoruba mythology and aesthetic in Nigerian History, both current and past. It explores a range of experiences and is articulated in a brilliant, poetic language revealing an extraordinary command of English and of World literature. Many like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka domesticate or rather Africanize the English they use to reflect their respective Igbo and Yoruba cultural backgrounds and the worldviews they represent.

Other prominent Nigerian writers include Ben Okri, Femi Osofisan, Helon Habila, Teju Cole and so on. Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* is the story of a spirit child, an abiku, born to poor Nigerian parents and is in some sense, a postmodern descendant of Tutuola's narrative. Femi Osofisan, a Nigerian playwright has staged fifty television and stage plays. The poet and playwright, John Pepper Clark, edited and transcribed the Ijaw epic, *The Ozidi Saga*. Helon Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* is a complex book that interweaves seven narratives, collectively speaking of life under dictatorship rule in Nigeria. Teju Cole's *Open City* is his debut novel. The novel is

primarily set in New York City and concerns a Nigerian immigrant, Julius, who has recently broken up with his girlfriend.

Since literature is a cultural production, it is dynamic and so always evolving. Thus, African literature continues to change according to the times. This factor of change leads to two important observations about contemporary African literature, the place of women and the influence of globalization and migration. For a long time, the men expressed the African experience. However, in recent times women now present their own experiences and can be heard. There are so many female writers now across the continent and have established themselves as major voices of contemporary Africa. Contemporary Nigerian writing focuses on the global issues like migration, exile, trans-multi culturalism and to questions on individual and collective identity.

Women writers have emerged at the forefront of the movement to restore African women to their proper place in the study of African history, society and culture. The work of women writers is gaining significance and deserves to be examined within the context of canon formation-authors and texts focusing on such topics as the heritage of women's literature, images of women in the works of male writers and women in traditional and contemporary society. These writers use literature as a tool for self-definition and self-liberation. They depict the female expressions of cultural nationalism in their works.

African female writers continue to deploy literature as a vehicle to redefine gender roles in African society. The dominant theme of female writings is that of female subjugation. Such writings explore the socio-cultural inhibitions which impede the development of the woman both at public and domestic spheres in African

patriarchal societies. The writers demonstrate how women negotiate their way between tradition and modernity. The female writers have shifted their focus from the plight of women within domesticity to assess their participation and contributions in the public domain.

The 1960s and 1970s marked the emergence of black female writers. Grace Ogot's *The Promised Land* was the first novel by a black woman to be published. Gradually, black female writers like Ama Ata Aidoo, Flora Nwapa, Mariama Bâ, Grace Ogot, Efua Sutherland and Buchi Emecheta initiated the advent of women's writing. Nigerian female writers like Buchi Emecheta and Flora Nwapa have challenged or modified our understanding of Nigerian history and society with works that consciously introduce feminist perspectives. Nwapa's *Efuru* was the first novel to be published by a woman writer in Nigeria.

Buchi Emecheta is the author of several novels and has now created her own publishing house in London, where she resides. Her most acclaimed novel to date is *The Joys of Motherhood*, which examines marriage and the family in the village and colonial city from a woman's perspective. Ama Ata Aidoo is a playwright, short-story writer and novelist. In each of these genres, Aidoo, who has an extraordinary ear for dialogue, renders the dynamism and complexity of women's experiences in rapidly changing societies. Sefi Atta brings a fresh insight into the ground-breaking spirit of twenty-first-century Nigerian novels by women in a genre that was once dominated by misogynist depictions of subservient female characters who sacrifice their lives for the welfare of the community. She is an important writer whose works focus more on women and their problems.

Sefi Atta was born in Lagos, Nigeria and had most of her education in the United Kingdom and the United States. Although a Chartered Accountant, she is also a graduate of the creative writing programme at the Antioch University, Los Angeles. Her short stories have appeared in journals, including *Los Angeles Review* and *Mississippi Review*. Atta's works have garnered several literary awards which include the 2006 Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa and the 2009 Noma Award for Publishing in Africa. She has received the prize and respect of several noted African writers such as Buchi Emecheta, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Helon Habila. In 2004, Atta was honored with a Mississippi Arts Commission Grant to support her work.

Atta continues to carry the torch borne by women writers like Flora Nwapa, Ifeoma Okoye, and Buchi Emecheta who preceded her. Her work has been published widely on the African continent and in the United States. Her writing focuses on the situations in which Nigerians have found themselves and continue to find themselves and is at once harmoniously poetic and biting frank. Like Adichie and Unigwe, Sefi Atta's writing explores fictional accounts of women's identities and the tensions that occur between traditionalist and modernist views of what women's lives ought to be in post-colonial Nigeria.

Atta's debut novel, *Everything Good Will Come*, has gained the most critical attention to date due to its feminist concerns. In 2006, the novel was awarded the inaugural Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature. Inspired by Atta's passion for recounting what she has seen and experienced, the novel debunks the cultural expectations of domesticity, motherhood, wifehood, and passivity through the creation of fictional figures who assert agency in public spaces. Atta's early life as a young Nigerian girl in a boarding school in England away from home is similar to that of her protagonist,

Enitan. But Atta denies that her characters are direct portraits of her own experience. The themes of perspective affected by some form of growth are prominent in the novel, and although there may not be a simple transcription of a real life person, autobiography is relevant.

. Atta's second novel, *Swallow* was published in 2008. The novel *Swallow* addresses the drastic rejection of gendered expectations of sexual submission. It represents the ordeals of a working-class young Nigerian woman in the mid-1980s metropolis of Lagos. However, unlike *Everything Good Will Come*, where women struggle to assert themselves in public spaces, *Swallow* depicts women who already occupy professional spaces. A former secretary working at the Federal Community Bank, Atta's protagonist, Tolani, has lost her job due to her formal complaint of sexual harassment against her line manager. Rendered unemployed with no source of livelihood, Tolani, together with Rose, a roommate who shares a similar fate, are forced to make critical choices for survival. While Tolani becomes a businesswoman, Rose turns into a drug mule using her body to peddle drug, an act that eventually leads to her death. By refusing to be passive in the face of sexist abuse and daring the risk of death, Atta's fictional figures assert their wills in an unwilling society.

A Bit of Difference (2012), much like the first two novels, takes a similar subject matter but in a different setting. The novel is partly set in London as well as Lagos, with the majority of the latter setting in flashback. It explores diasporic experiences through themes such as hybridity, culture clash, and alienation. The novel narrates Deola Bello's independent mind-set that privileges her professional lifestyle abroad over a maternal urge to nest. Opting for career advancement, Deola disconnects from family and friends. She dismisses her mother's advice to come home for good. London proves a haven for Deola, offering a unique platform from

which to rebuff the pressure to marry and have children; however, it fails to provide Deola with a sense of community.

Atta's recent novel *The Bead Collector* (2018) takes a different subject matter as its focus. It is set in a tumultuous period in Nigeria, an era haunted by the aftermath of the Biafran War. It describes how interactions between people from diverse cultures can result in their questioning their past and present life experiences. At a party, Remi Lawal, a middle-class greeting card owner, meets Frances Cooke, an American art dealer who has come to Nigeria to collect beads. The friendship progresses, with Remi integrating Frances into her privileged inner circle where they engage in multifaceted discussions about colonialism, marriage, and motherhood. Remi willingly shares her views with Frances, describing life among Nigerian's elite; however, Frances offers quite little about her background, triggering Remi's suspicion of the likelihood of Frances being a CIA agent.

In all her novels like *Everything Good Will Come*, *Swallow*, *A Bit of Difference*, and *The Bead Collector*, Atta demonstrates artistic ingenuity in entwining women's issues with political concerns linking the woman question to problems relating to social structures that encourage gender inequality. Such representation has attracted diverse views from Atta's readers. Some scholars have lauded Atta's creative skills. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie says that there is wit, intelligence and a delicious irreverence in this book. She admires Sefi Atta's courage in choosing to look at her fictional world through fiercely feminist lenses. Although her novels in-depth historic documentation might have been considered as unnecessary, Atta appears to uphold this narrative style, since it allows her to weave the story in with real facts.

Atta's *Everything Good will Come* beams its searchlight on the smallest unit of the society which is a microcosm of the larger society. It is a narrative that chronicles events in and around the life of Enitan, right from childhood to adulthood. The story which is told from a first person perspective is a bildungsroman, which reveals an unbroken growth pattern till Enitan comes of age as a self-conscious and assertive woman. Enitan's process of growth comes with self-realization which prompts greater response and reaction to the activities which go on around her. These processes motivate her sexuality and individuality.

Everything Good Will Come displays certain ideological persuasions which express certain socio-political and gender commitment; it could also be described as reflecting self-realization, women-centered and nation-centered in its thematic pre-occupations. These ideological persuasions, as it were, not only project the critical perspective from which Atta writes, but also highlight the issues she fictionalizes as socio-political and socio-economical realities to the contemporary Nigerian society which she narrates from her diasporic experience.

The protagonist of the novel, Enitan is a replica of the writer herself. This novel is truly a saga of the central character Enitan whose life and growth creates great hurdles. It also narrates how she becomes a survivor of the vicissitudes and harshest conditions in her life. In it, Atta dramatises the realities of human conditions namely marriage, religion, culture, and political instability. She also portrays the clashes between traditionalism and modernism in Nigeria through her novel. Atta, by creating strong woman characters with diverse natures, shows how they react against various situations.

Having grown up in Nigeria and been educated in London like her character, Atta's life has clearly influenced the novel. Her portrayal of Enitan's relationship with Nigeria, colonialism and civil unrest is told with genuine complexity, exploring Enitan's privileges and oppressions at the same time. Atta gives an honest account of city living in Nigeria, eschewing the representations of a monolithic Africa that are so often offered up in the Western narrative. Every phase and relationship in Enitan's life captures society's attempts to keep women in their place.

Atta's story-telling art and skill delicately weaves an account of motherland, especially from the feminist perspective, which allows continuous and strong reverberation of female voices. She focuses on the issues of relationship, education and discovery that give rise to assertion. The novel captures a passionate and lyrical story through the eyes of Enitan who narrates the events that describe the country, her family, herself and the women who are close to her. It is a courageous story about friendship, family, ambition and self-discovery.

In *Everything Good Will Come*. Atta's protagonist, Enitan, renounces subordinate roles in the private domain to situate herself in the political sphere. It is a catalogue of atrocities often perpetrated by men against the female folks. It shows how African culture has helped in certain areas to maintain patriarchal hegemony. As a lawyer and activist, Enitan campaigns for the welfare of women prisoners and write letters to the president, petitioning for the release of women journalist, a campaign that ultimately leads to the annulment of her marriage. Opting for activism rather than prioritizing marriage might be considered anti-family, specifically in a society where women are praised the more they surrender their rights to protest. Nevertheless, Atta authenticates such preference as mirroring the genuine life experiences of some Nigerian women and others who lean towards such independent tendencies.

The novel portrays liberated personalities who rebel against restrictive circumstances in private spaces to assert themselves in public domains. Whereas the narrative roles assigned to the fictional figures of the previous era are limited to domesticity with themes of motherhood, wifedom, infertility and marital unfaithfulness, Atta depicts strong female voice in the political arena. Enitan makes a giant stride in her personal and political development the moment she learns that freedom was never intended to be sweet. Indeed, she works for her freedom the moment she renounces marriage and opts for single parenthood, by dynamically engaging in political actions alongside other women pressing for gender equality.

The next chapter deals with Enitan's entanglement in the conservative Nigerian society.

Chapter Two

Enitan's Entanglement

Everything Good Will Come is a coming-of-age novel by Nigerian author Sefi Atta about a girl growing into a woman in postcolonial Nigeria and England. Throughout the novel the main character, Enitan, is faced with various personal entanglements connected with family troubles, rape, cheating boyfriends, and imprisonment. It is also a biting commentary on post-independent governments in Nigeria and tensions between Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa ethnic groups after the Biafran War.

Sefi Atta through the character Enitan greatly lashes out at the institution called marriage through which male establishes their dominancy. Enitan is a character who can completely fit into the image of “the modern woman”, the woman who would be the equal of men, who would think, work and act like a man and instead of bemoaning her inferiority to men she would declare her their equal. She believes in modern woman concept. It was against the old traditional concepts of women and also against polygamy. She always constructs her own ideologies which helps to self discover her.

Enitan's search for independence and internal peace parallels that of her nation, as she looks to find a way to balance tradition and modernity in her life using her own ideologies. Her struggles are relatable and her life is both extraordinary and entirely average, because Atta has written the story of a normal woman, where all women can find themselves within. Themes emerge across Enitan's story as she navigates her position as an empowered woman in post-colonial Nigeria. Female assertiveness, Patriarchal hegemony, Gender equality, Political unrest, Friendship,

Class difference, Activism, Self discovery are the major themes of the novel. Enitan makes a space for herself in a time and place where patriarchal traditions were valued, and Atta tenderly writes the nuances that explain how a woman can love a country that sometimes doesn't seem to love her back.

Everything Good Will Come is about Enitan who is entangled in a conservative Nigerian society. Post colonial Nigeria which is patriarchal in nature creates a tough space for women to grow and sustain. Every time the heroine loses her identity and she has to struggle hard to identify herself in the midst of her mother's strong religious beliefs and her father's manipulative ways. She is entangled between her mother, Arin and father, Sunny Taiwo. Enitan reflects on her experience, "My graduation day ended in silence. I posed separately with either parent, and then vowed that they would never involve me in their arguments again" (84).

The struggles which seem overwhelming even to the adults in Nigeria at the time are presented to the teenage girl to navigate as she makes her choices within a patriarchal, male-oriented society. Enitan is entangled throughout her life. Therefore the primary motif of *Everything Good Will Come* reflects Atta's desire to project the woman as a survivor of the hurdles which characterize post-independence existence, and the worrisome atmosphere in contemporary Nigeria. Her central characters education and growth therefore function as a veritable launching-pad for surmounting the adversities that she encounters.

Everything Good Will Come is set in Lagos during 1971-1995 and captures the county's socio-political, domestic crises, Enitan's immediate environment and her life in Diaspora. The novel projects the tension which ensues from clash between traditionalism and the different faces and phases of modernization in Nigeria. Atta

gives an amazing array of characters in the novel, each with his or her own peculiarities, lovable and loveless traits, virtues and vices. Of these, some occupy the foreground of the novel while some rather recede into the background. The most prominent character is Enitan and other major characters are Sheri, Bandele Taiwo and Victoria Arinola. Niyi Franco, Grace Ameh, Mrs. Clara Mukoro and Mike are a few of the minor characters.

The novel revolves around Enitan's home, her school located in Lagos and also her school abroad. Sectionalized into four parts, the novel chronicles the heroine's life and the activities that occur around her from childhood till adulthood. Each attests to a particular phase in the journey to Enitan's self-discovery and realization, a journey which begins with departure and ends in no return. Each of these sections also situates the character's experiences within the time frame of 1971, 1975, 1985, 1995 and the experiences of the nation as an entity. The novel also explores how Enitan formed her own ideologies. These sections reveal the heroine's closure on the hinds of self discovery, freedom, and fulfillment. Different stages in the country's sociopolitical life are imaginatively captured along with domestic crises and tensions in Enitan's immediate environment.

The structure of the novel reflects the various stages of growth of the heroine. The first part "1971", shows the early stages in the life of Enitan and her friend Sheri. For instance Sheri is described as a hibiscus that attracted insects. But she is raped and later she is described as a scarlet hibiscus, because the rape and the abortion left her with a damaged womb. The second part set in "1975" sees Enitan in school, and her relationship with people of the opposite sex. The third part set in "1985", shows Enitan with more experiences and is also set in an atmosphere of

military usurpation of political power. The final part set in “1995” also shows that the heroine has gained and garnered more experiences and has become more assertive.

The story begins with an eleven year old Enitan. At this age, Enitan is a naive, ignorant, inexperienced child. She has been nurtured by her patriarchal father who showers her with love, thereby making her mother appear evil to her. She is raised in a divided home struggling to identify herself in the midst of her mother's strong religious beliefs and her father's manipulative political ways. She is entangled between her mother and father. Enitan says:

My parent's quarrels were becoming more senseless; not more frequent or more loud. One wrong word from my father could bring on my mother's rage. He was a wicked man. He had always been a wicked man. She would shout Bible passages at him. He would remain calm. (17)

Being an only child, after the death of her brother, her parents had strict demands that restrain her from having a normal childhood. Her rebellious nature was first seen when she defies her mother's wishes and leaves the house on a Sunday to play with the girl next door, Sheri, who is called “yellow” because her father is a black man and her mother a white English woman. Sheri is a young girl who has sassy and rebellious nature. Enitan says, “She was a bold-face, unlike me” (47). Their friendship builds but they were soon separated, Enitan is sent to a boarding school different from Sheri's. Enitan's father, a lawyer, hopes that she will take over his firm once she has finished school and prove herself as a lawyer. Sheri and Enitan keep in touch, writing letters back and forth telling about school, boys and about their next meet:

Over the years, Sheri and I exchanged letters, sharing our thoughts on sheets torn from exercise books, ending them “love and peace, your trusted friend”. Sheri was always in trouble. Someone called her loose, someone punished her, someone tried to beat her up. It was always girls. She seemed to get along with boys. (46)

During one of the long school holidays, Enitan and Sheri met and attended a picnic and Sheri was raped at the party. The image of Sheri’s rape affects Enitan’s ability to trust men; the aftermath of Sheri’s rape temporarily terminates their friendship with Enitan being sent to London and Sheri being sent to the hospital due to her attempt to abort her pregnancy with a hanger.

Years passed and Enitan returns to Lagos to stay with her father, work under him and starts her career as a lawyer. She began dating with a struggling artist, Mike, and has an emotionally complex but short-lived relationship with him. Enitan runs into Sheri again and reconnects with her. Sheri is a mistress to a Muslim brigadier, who pays for her living and gives her a good life. She believes in playing the system rather than settling down with a man. Enitan says, “Sheri was sugary, as we said in Lagos; she had a man, an older man, a man as old as my father even, and he would pay her rent” (92). Later on Enitan persuades Sheri to start her catering business. Sheri follows Enitan’s advice and starts her own business and becomes independent.

Enitan meets and become close with a man by the name of Niyi Franco, who is separated from his child who was taken away by his ex wife when she moved to Britain. This relationship quickly results into a marriage. Enitan at first feels comfortable and safe in Niyi’s arms, but their relationship is soon tested when Enitan refuses to submit herself to his demanding ways. After she becomes pregnant, Niyi

and Enitan's differences over each other's behaviour and her father's outspokenness and subsequent arrest forces her into activism that results in a night in jail. Enitan proceeds to join a group of women in the fight against government for women's right during her pregnancy. Niyi do not understand Enitan's ideology. Her drive to make change is frowned upon by her husband who wants her to stay at home and take on "women-like" task. She says that:

Our home was ridiculous. He was carrying on his standoff and I'd retreated fully to the spare room. Silence had become noisy: doors clicking, curtains rolling, and at night, jazz and crickets. Sometimes I heard Niyi laughing on the phone. I wanted to tell him that I was finding it difficult to sleep on my belly at night. I wanted to talk to anyone about my father. (237)

Enitan is entangled to choose between her personal life and public life. Niyi's lack of support for his wife's beliefs, along with her unwillingness to concede to Niyi's requests, leads to their separation. Enitan continues to stand up for what she believes in, wanting women to have the ability to choose whether or not they will be submissive in the society with hopes of individuality.

The black women are doubly colonised entities and they have to tolerate all kinds of subjugation and violence not only from their society but also from their own family. They have no good relationship with their husbands based on love. It is evident in the life experiences of the three main lady characters- Enitan, Sheri and Arin. They are physically and mentally tortured and victimized in both their male centered society and by the domination of colonial power. At the end of the novel,

Enitan frees herself from the entanglement and says, “Everything good will come to me” (329).

Female assertiveness is a key issue in *Everything Good Will Come*. Atta’s novel has given prominence to female characters. They are highly assertive and independent. Women assertiveness stands as a need to break the patriarchal shackles of the society. Atta’s fiction displays female characters that are fed up with coping with men domination and oppression. Those female characters do not want to live like their mothers and undergo the same ill treatment from their male counterparts. Enitan says:

As far back as my grandmother’s generation we’d been getting degrees and holding careers. My mother’s generation were the pioneer professionals. We, their daughter.s, were expected to continue. We had no choice in the present recession. But there was a saying, and I’d only ever heard it said by other women, that books were not edible. (179)

Everything Good Will Come highlights a few stereotypes and patriarchal dictates which reinforce men’s position and relegate women to an inferior position. Enitan’s view about native law is a telling example about how she overtly criticizes the native law which reflects nothing else but societal dictates over women. The most prominent male characters in the novel are Sunny and Niyi. They treated their wives as inferior. Sunny cheated Arin by having an illegal affair with another woman and plots to separate Enitan from her mother. According to Niyi, women are inferior to men. He warns Enitan by saying, “Better watch what you’re saying. Next thing they’ll be calling me woman wrapper” (178). He fails to understand Enitan during her tough

times. Both Niyi and Sunny stands as an example for Patriarchal hegemony in the novel. Enitan says:

In my 29 years no man ever told me to show respect. No man ever needed to. I had seen how women respected men and ended up shouldering burdens like one of those people who carried firewood on their heads, with their necks as high as church spires and foreheads crushed. Too many women, I thought, ended up treating domestic frustrations like mild case of indigestion. (179)

Economic independence plays an important part in Women assertiveness. Enitan's ideology is a way to break the patriarchal shackles of the society and fight for one's emancipation. In *Everything Good Will Come*, Enitan, Sheri and Grace reinforce the belief that women assertiveness can only be achieved when they hold the purse strings. Enitan, owing to her Western education, finds out that women need to be economically independent if they want to carve a name for themselves. Either with Mike or with Niyi, Enitan resents the idea of being dependant on a man .She lives her life independently. Imbued with this economically independent spirit, she has advised Sheri to drop Hasan and start a business and become successful. Likewise, Sheri starts her catering business and become successful. She happily says, "We're making money" (142).Through her novels, Atta challenges the stereotypical literary portrayal of female characters.

Gender equality is always emphasized by the protagonist, Enitan. The novel encompasses characters who stand up for their survival and rights which enable them to revisit the conventional set of rules against gender equality. Niyi always considers 'kitchen' as a place for women. He claims that he was totally inept inside the

kitchens. Once Niyi asks Enitan to serve him drinks, she replies boldly that, “You have hands” (179). The voices from women of all spheres become clearly audible, through the depiction of characters like the journalist, Enitan, Grace Ameh and the Mother of Prisons. Enitan’s uprising as a social activist is something that Atta tries to inculcate in almost all her women. The resilience and courage make women overcome their obstacles and move on in their journey towards self-assertion.

Political unrest prevails in the novel. It is set in a tempestuous period in Nigeria’s history. It spans over twenty-four years between 1971- 1995 at a time when politically, the Nigerian nation was crippled under a series of successive and bloody military coups. The first bloody coup of 1966 led to the Nigerian civil war, Biafra, which lasted from 1967-1970. *Everything Good Will Come* is set in post-colonial Nigeria, and is also post-Biafra. The legacies of the two national events, the military coups and the civil war weigh heavily on the narrative. It is within the framework of post-Biafra political instability, national oppression, government corruption, and temporary democratic rule shattered once again by military brutality within which Sefi Atta’s Enitan experiences her childhood. This situation helps her to form her socio-political ideologies. Enitan reflects her childhood days by saying that:

I would listen to radio bulletins on how our troops were faring against the Biafrans. I would hear the slogan: “To keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done”. My father would ask me to hide under my bed whenever we had bomb raid alerts. Sometimes I heard him talking about Uncle Alex; how he’d known beforehand there was going to be a civil war; how he’d joined the Biafrans and died fighting for them even though he hated guns. (4)

Activism is a dimension of feminism which plays a prominent role in the novel. Enitan's father is arrested but she did not allow his business to fall. She joined Uncle Fatai to fight for his release and the release of others. Enitan has to suffer incarceration as a price for activism. She is ready to give up her life for the survival of her society. Though her mother did not support her fighting for her father, Enitan is determined to fight on. All these did not discourage Enitan. It is at this point that she meets Grace Ameh, a journalist and human right activist. For Enitan, the fight to save her father would not come from the kitchen. According to her, women should come out of the kitchen space to fight for her rights. The kitchen has become a destructive metaphor limiting the woman from actualizing her dreams. Grace Ameh inspires and encourages Enitan to fight on not minding what the society is saying.

The woman must align with other women, because standing alone, the woman becomes another victim. Ameh invites Enitan to join a Rights group. Enitan and Ameh attended the first meeting and they are later arrested by the oppressive instruments of the state and are subsequently incarcerated. In the detention cell, Enitan meets other women, some of whom their minds are lost and have become insane like Do-Re-Mi and Mother of the Prison. Another woman has sores all over her body. Grace Ameh and Enitan are released the following day. These experiences remain stamped in Enitan's mind. She has overcome many adversities and emerges stronger from all of them. She fought until her father transferred the estate to her mother. She fought for his release from detention and also remained strong even when she lost her mother. Enitan joining the fight for democracy rather than fighting only for the women shows that the African woman has transcended sectional limitations. The salvation of the nation through the multiplier effect will in turn lead to the salvation of the woman. Enitan has become so bold that she could shout on military

dictatorship to get out of her country. Her activism pays off with the release of her father from incarceration.

Self discovery is the prominent theme of the novel. The novel itself is a fight for human rights as a whole. While women in particular still have to go to great lengths to be equal with men, the overall battle is for human empowerment and the release of her father is one small step in the right direction. The women characters in this novel were confident, and economically empowered. They proved that women can lead a successful life without the help of men. They have their own ideologies and liberate from the traditional norms to prove their self-identity. They break the unwanted traditional norms and liberate themselves from the oppressing patriarchal society. At the end of the novel, Enitan takes a big decision to self discovers her:

My husband, our home and small suburban community like a busybody extended family, I had these reasons to stay. But I was lucky to have survived what I believed I wouldn't, the smell of my mother's death. I couldn't remain as I was before, otherwise my memory of her would have been in vain, and my survival would certainly be pointless. Anyone who experienced such a trauma would understand. The aftermath could be a reincarnation...This was the option I chose. (326)

The analysis of Atta's language shows that she has deliberately avoided the use of masculine pronouns to collectively refer to males and females. Atta uses non-sexist language in her works. An inclusive language can be equally termed a "non-sexist" language. Actually, the use of non-sexist language suggests gender equality. It suggests the idea that the novel does not promote any domination or supremacy of the male gender over the female one. Atta's deliberate use of a gender neutral language

had not gained attention in those years. She uses inclusive idiolects in the novel, *Everything Good Will Come*. She partakes in the challenge to fashion a new and positive image for women in African fiction. The novel first focuses on the use of inclusive language and second, it provides an analysis of assertive female idiolects. For example, Enitan's father says to her that, "Anyone who bullies you, beat them up" (34). Atta uses the word "them" to refer both males and females. She has resorted to gender- inclusive language and turn down a systematic use of generic pronouns. Atta's language shows the assertiveness of female characters, an attitude which is to be construed as a deliberate attempt of the novelist to portray her female characters as dynamic and ready to break the patriarchal shackles of the male-dominated setting of the novel.

Techniques are literary devices a writer employs in his/her work in the course of narration in order to pass the intended message and also to achieve the desired objectives. The novelists make use of first person narrative technique which is also known as autobiographical technique. It is a narration where the author participates in the happenings of the story he relates. The story is presented from his perspective. The narrator is thus directly or indirectly involved in the story. This technique is used throughout the novel *Everything Good Will Come*. It is used by the narrator to recount her experiences as an adult. For example, "My voice was unnaturally high, it was nothing but minstrel show, I thought except no one bothered to watch as Sheri and I headed for the kitchen. Inside, I slammed an empty pot on a stove, what am I doing here?" (209).

Flashback is a device in the narrative of motion, picture, novel etc., by which an event or scene taking place before the present time in the narration is inserted into the chronological structure of the work. Such a flashback may be recollected through

a character, a dream sequence or dialogue. For example, this technique was used by Enitan's mother to remind her about when they used to attend church together, "Do you remember, when you used to come to church with me, that some of the sisters would miss church for a week? "Yes, Mummy" "Do you know why they missed church?" "No." "Because they were unclean", she said (18).

Suspense is an attention riveting device created by an author. It is the creation of the state of anxious expectancy or uncertainty that usually builds up while the audiences are waiting for a decision or outcome of an intense or prolonged action. The audiences are tensed up as to what is going to happen to the character to which they have positive emotional disposition. This technique is used to narrate Sheri's rape incident. The readers will be tensed to know what will happen next. This brings about the suspense in the novel.

In discussing literature, however, the term "symbol" is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in turn signifies something or suggests a range of reference. It can also be applied to characters who might symbolize a particular thing or group of people. Enitan in the novel, *Everything Good Will Come* symbolizes a modern educated woman. She gave up her marriage for a journey of self discovery. Another stylistic effect in this novel is the reversal of stereotype. Almost all the women in this novel are bold, courageous, assertive and economically empowered. Sheri is a business woman who would not want to be controlled by Brigadier Hassan's wealth, Enitan has her job and does not bother about the Franco's wealth, and Grace Ameh played her trade in the volatile field of Nigeria journalism. Clara Mukoro refuses to be silent when her husband is arrested.

Silence is another stylistic device used to achieve the self-discovery thrust in this novel. All the characters experience one form of silence or the other to achieve their aims. Sunny Taiwo's silence sends Enitan's mother out of the house. Niyi's silence drives Enitan to the spare room. Sunny Taiwo still holds tenaciously to the patriarchal belief that a woman must seal her mouth at all times. That was why he considers Clara Mukoro a disgrace because she reported to the media that her husband Peter Mukoro is unfaithful. When Enitan's father is arrested, Arin uses silence as revenge. Atta uses this weapon to ridicule women who have remained silent in the face of growing oppression. She tenaciously believes that silence is no longer a weapon in the face of oppression and degradation. Indeed Sefi Atta strongly feels it is only the voice of the individual raised in protest against unbearable native, custom and draconian leadership that can bring meaningful change in the society. All the women bolted out of their silence and became vocal. This according to Atta is the only way they could bring meaningful change to the society.

Enitan is totally entangled in the conservative Nigerian society. She endures much agony and pain. She stands out as a loud cry of womanhood and brings out the struggle of the African women in the male dominating Nigerian society. Enitan looks upto many sources of support but finally, she identifies the solutions on her own and frees herself from the entanglement of the society. Atta reveals radical ways in the novel to end female subjugation. Through the character of Enitan, Atta conveys that a woman should not be silent for a long time, she should voice out her opinions not only for herself but also for other women.

The next chapter deals with unusual friendship between the protagonist, Enitan and her childhood friend, Sheri.

Chapter Three

Unusual Friendship

Everything Good Will Come traces the story of both Enitan Taiwo and Sheri Bakare who are strong and fiercely intelligent young women and with their indomitable spirit attains selfhood in a culture that still insists on female submission. The novel charts the unusual friendship and fate of the two girls, Enitan and Sheri, one who is prepared to manipulate the traditional system and one who attempts to defy it. The female characters in this novel are very assertive and utilize all means available to them to affirm their individuality.

The relationship between Enitan and her best friend, Sheri, is an intimate one and provokes interest to read the novel. Sheri is the daughter of Chief Engineer Bakare and an English woman. She is motherless. She lives with her grandmother, Alhaja and is worldly wise beyond her years. As children, Sheri and Enitan were opposites. They have different ideologies. They came from different backgrounds and have different family structures. Enitan was an Anglican but Sheri was a Moslem girl and she didn't know much about Christianity. But both of them admire and respect each other despite their religious differences. From childhood to adulthood, their relationship is smooth and productive. In the same way, Sheri's Muslim polygamous home is peaceful and habitable despite their number as against Enitan's monogamous background. Their friendship begins early in the novel and continues until the very end, but, like any relationship, it has its ups and downs.

The novel takes place during the Biafran war (1967 – 1970), a civil war which occurs between Nigerian government and Biafran state. Biafra represents the nationalist aspirations of Igbo people, whose leadership felt they could no longer

coexist with the Northern dominated federal government. Enitan reflects on her childhood experience during the civil war and says:

The day the Civil War broke out, he delivered the news. Uncle Fatai arrived soon afterward and they bent heads as if in prayer to listen to the radio. Through the years, from their arguments about federalists, secessionists, and bloody British, I'd amazed as much knowledge about the events in my country as any seven-year-old could. (4)

Sheri belongs to the group of Igbo people whereas Enitan belongs to the group of Yoruba people. This is one of the major differences exist between them. Therefore their friendship is termed as “unusual friendship”. Though it is unusual, their friendship remains strong. The other differences prevail between these two friends are racial discrimination, class difference, background, lifestyle, status, education and career. Enitan and Sheri do not allow these differences to affect their friendship.

The first conversation that occurs between the two girls is steeped in the political atmosphere of Post-Biafra Nigeria when Sheri asks Enitan whether she had watched the execution of the armed robbers on the television the previous night, Sheri smiled, “Ah, it was good. They shot them on the beach. Tied them, covered their eyes. One, two, three. “Dead?” “Pafuka”, she said and dropped her head to one side” (9). Rather than experience trauma at the sight of such extreme violence, Sheri reminisces on the events as though they are a pleasant thought to be ruminated on and cherished. Enitan is a child who has been nurtured by her father's values and she must always reconcile her view of the world to that of her father's values. Her father is against capital punishment and so subconsciously, even though Enitan is not explicitly aware of this, so is she. Even though she has ‘not been allowed’ to watch, her political views

have already begun to form. She is encouraged by her father and his friends to listen in on their heated political discussions. The two friends have varied opinions about the political struggle which takes place in the country

The arrival of Sheri is the turning point in Enitan's life, "Yoruba tradition has us believe that Nature heralds the beginning of a person's transition: to life, adulthood, and death" (7). Sheri is everything the reserved Enitan is not allowed to be. Thus, she is the shadow to Enitan's light. She is the embodiment of Enitan's unvoiced yearning, that is, the desire to be a girl unencumbered by her mother. Enitan's mother and Sheri do not like each other. So they become as light and dark whose paths cannot cross.

Sheri represents everything that is absent in Enitan. Where Sheri is very strong, Enitan is weak. Enitan will later declare in her adulthood that, "She was stronger than any strong person I knew. The word strong usually meant that a person was being short-changed emotionally and physically and had to live with it. I had always been motivated by fear, of lowliness, of pessimism, of failure. I was not strong" (301). Sheri is the incarnation of the character traits that Enitan's mother had subdued in her up until their meeting.

The first encounter with Sheri takes place in the garden. It sets the pace for Enitan's social and moral education. It contributes to the advancement and swift unraveling of the actions embedded in the plot. At the beginning of the narrative, Enitan is under the control of her mother. Her ideologies are shaped by her parents. She does not know much about the society. Sheri's appearance in her life made her to understand about the society. Their meeting in the garden is an allusion to the Garden of Eden. Sheri, in this context, is the serpent urging Enitan on to forbidden

knowledge. Enitan calls Sheri as her tempter, “She was like an imp who had come to tempt me. I couldn't get rid of her” (35). Sheri Bakare, the imp, may be read both as a character and as an extension of Enitan.

Enitan's mother, Arin erected fence around their house. Sheri crosses the fence to meet Enitan. The fence remains as a symbol for the differences between the friends. Enitan says, “I was bored. I waited by the barbed wire fence ... Minutes later, she walked in. Just as I thought, she was a half-caste” (8). During Enitan's childhood, her parents constantly fight for petty reasons and Sheri was an escape for her. Enitan says, “Sheri had led me to the gap between parental consent and disapproval” (38).

Raised as an only child, Enitan maintains a close relationship with her liberal father but is scared of her stern mother. Enitan keeps her budding friendship with Sheri a secret because of her rascal ways, meeting only when her parents were out. Enitan learns about sexuality through her friend and preteen neighbour, Sheri. But when Sheri's rape, and her abortion and subsequent hospitalisation become news, Enitan's parents put an end to their rapport. Enitan's feminist streak would materialise during her nine-year stay in the UK, where she goes to complete her secondary and tertiary education. There, she discards the notion that Sheri's brashness justified her rape and learns from a boyfriend that her virginity is hers to do with as she pleases. Upon her return to Nigeria, Enitan reunites with Sheri and is surprised that her friend is content with being a mistress. She later chalks it up to the fact that Sheri's beauty and men's willingness to remunerate it with material comforts have kept her from being ambitious. Atta, through Enitan tries to activate the change related to female independence, equality and empowerment.

Enitan, from her childhood, has decided to pursue her career in a field which can lead her to the highest level of the society, turning down the stereotype which stipulates that women should be defined by their role in their household. Enitan's opinion appears to be a need for women to break the ice wall that confines them in an inferior position. In the same way, Sheri, from a poor education background, holds the view that men are no longer charming princes who care for their lovers, that is why females should fight for themselves. Enitan, sides with Sheri since the former strongly advises the latter to find her way out by hardworking than behave like a house girl who is to be dictated the right way.

Racial discrimination also exists between these unusual friends. It is a significant social issue because people use racial differences as the basis for discrimination. Sooner after independence, Nigeria like the other freely rejoiced African independent communities have consciously twisted a new form of home-grown racism in black Africa that proves far injurious than what was experienced during the colonial era. In the novel *Everything Good Will Come*, Sheri suffers from racial discrimination:

It wasn't always that clear to her. She was eight years old when, fed up with a boy at school who laughed at her features, she ran home one afternoon and cut off her hair, trimmed her lashes to stubs and rubbed brown shoe polish on her face. Her grandmother Alhaja found her standing before the mirror and ordered her back to the boy. He was singing that Yoruba song, "I married a yellow girl" when Sheri grabbed him. "I beat him up", she said. (154)

Sheri is considered as “yellow”, because her mother is a white English woman and her father is Muslim. The Yoruba- English dictionary calls her as, “the child of a black person and white person” (154). So Enitan’s parents considered her as other. They do not support the friendship between Enitan and Sheri. They wish them to separate. Arin, Enitan’s mother took many steps to separate them but it remained useless.

The other major difference in their friendship is class difference. Enitan belongs to the privilege class and Sheri belongs to the lower class, “half-caste”. Their class difference is shown through the comparison between Enitan’s house and Bakare’s house. Enitan says:

Our house was a bungalow covered in golden trumpets and bougainvillea. The Bakare’s was an enormous one-story with aquamarine glass shutters, so square-shaped, I thought it resembled a castle. Except for a low hedge of dried up pitanga cherries lining the driveway and a mango tree by the house, the entire yard was cement.

(21)

The class structure in Nigeria was the creation of colonialism where British commerce in Nigeria played prominent roles in the formation. Class struggle is the active expression of a theoretical class conflict looked at from any kind of socialist perspective. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, leading ideologists of communism, wrote that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Though there is possibility for class conflict among Enitan and Sheri, they forget their differences and remain together.

Social class refers to the grouping of individuals in a stratified social hierarchy, usually based on wealth, education, and occupation. Sociologists analyze social class using a simple three-stratum model of stratification. It falls into three categories, a wealthy and powerful upper class that owns and controls the means of production, a middle class of professional or salaried workers, and a lower class that rely on hourly wages for their livelihood.

Enitan belongs to the upper class society and Sheri belongs to the lower class society. Their ideologies differ based on their classes. Arin, Enitan's mother always hates Sheri for being a low class girl. Enitan says, "There was a name my mother had for children like Sheri. They were omo-ita, street children. If they had homes, they didn't like staying in them. What they liked, instead, was to go around fighting and cursing, and getting upto mischief" (38). Social class often has far reaching effects, influencing one's educational and professional opportunities and access to resources such as healthcare and housing.

The novel concentrates on a person's socioeconomic class which has wide-ranging effects. It may determine the schools he is able to attend, the jobs open to him, who he may marry, and his treatment by police and the courts. Life of Enitan and Sheri shows this variation. Enitan studied in England and became a lawyer and was working in her father's firm. Enitan crosses every stage of her life, as a young woman, young wife and mother with too many expectations. The choices and decisions are her own; right from her friends to the man she marries. But Sheri became a mistress to a brigadier. Enitan's dream is fulfilled but Sheri's dream of becoming an actress was not fulfilled.

Everything Good Will Come highlights the space defined by the society for women, as she must secure space both at home and in the society. Sheri settles down with a married man, and Enitan feels pathetic for her friend's decision. Enitan has different perspective upon marriage; she reflects that, "Marriage could immediately wipe out a sluttish past, but angel or not, a woman had to have a child" (98). Enitan is looking down on her friend, yet again, "I remembered only that she was the most powerful girl I knew, and then she wasn't anymore, and I became disappointed with her" (97). She feels that she is better than Sheri because she is living a seemingly blameless, more worthy lifestyle. She sees a woman in the kitchen and immediately assumes they are succumbing to their role in society. According to her, kitchen is the loneliest room. Sheri cooks for the brigadier and takes care of the household chores:

She dusted with cleaning rags, sometimes with her fingers. She plumped cushions if she stood up, picked fluff from carpet, listened to the saddest Barbara Streisand songs. The rest of her time she spent preparing for Brigadier Hassan: her hair, her nails, dabbing perfumes and cooking meals. (153)

Enitan's strong desire and determination liberates Sheri from her relationship with the Brigadier and helps her to secure economic independence. Sheri becomes the sugary girl for the old Brigadier. The old Brigadier treats Sheri as a sexual being:

Prettiness could encourage people to treat a woman like a doll, to be played with, tossed around, fingered, dismembered and discarded. Prettiness could also make a woman lazy, if she were congratulated for it too often and remunerated too long. Sheri was the Nigerian man's ideal: pretty, shapely, yellow to boot, with some regard for woman's

station. Now she was a kitchen martyr, and may well have forgotten how to flaunt her mind. (100)

Sheri spends most of her time in the kitchen to cook for the old Brigadier. Enitan tells her, “You are not his cook” (99). Enitan has discovered the hidden potential of Sheri, she persuades her to set up a business on her own to free herself from the shackles of patriarchy. Sheri has the ability to cook for numerous people. So, Enitan encourages her to set up the catering business. Thus, Enitan understands the plight of Sheri and sympathizes with her. She rescues her friend from the abusive life.

Sheri also remains as a pillar of support to Enitan during her tough situation. When Enitan comes to know that her father has a son outside wedlock, she feels depressed. The painful incident urges her to leave her father’s home. When there is no place to take shelter in, she goes to Sheri’s house where Sheri takes care of her and nurtures her like her mother. The friendship helps Enitan to recover from her emotional breakdown. Sheri advises Enitan and says, “You can’t behave like this. You won’t be the first, and you won’t be the last. Our fathers, we know what they’re like. We just have to accept them as they are” (167). In actual fact, Sheri, Arin and Mother of the Prisons who are from a poor education background hold vibrant views on the same issue. Sheri, for example, explains that if a man happens to beat her, he will deal with him. It is quite surprising since uneducated women were first and foremost described as submissive wives. Sheri flouts the sacred principle which stipulates that a married woman will never raise a hand on her husband.

Both the friends help each other during their hard times. Enitan is the one who supports Sheri morally when she is raped by Damola and his friends at Iyoki Park. Initially, she is quite ignorant and believes that Sheri’s close acquaintance with the

boys is responsible for the misfortune. However much later in her life that Enitan realizes the fact that sexual violence cannot be justified at any cost. This incident teaches two friends to be more careful with men. The quarrel between Enitan and her husband begins when she denies to be a submissive “kitchen martyr”. Atta uses Enitan’s refusal to cook all the time for Niyi to counter the unbearable dictum in traditional society that the place of the woman is in the kitchen. Enitan is really worried when she has to spend most of the time in the kitchen cooking for her family. The day her father is arrested by the military government, many relatives pay a visit to Enitan’s home to enquire about him. Enitan is in a position to cook for many people. Sheri comes to rescue her. Sheri clearly understands the truth that in Nigeria even educated and economically independent woman cannot escape from discharging her duty as a wife. Sheri states that, “Education cannot change what’s inside a person’s veins. Scream and shout, if you like, bang your head against this wall , you will end up in the kitchen” (99). So, she rushes to save Enitan. She helps Enitan to cook for her family and in-laws.

The friendship between Sheri and Enitan survives patriarchal dominance, broken relationships, failed marriages and also the effects of political instability. Sheri and Enitan perceive their friendship as a positive force to confront the difficulties. Enitan reminds that, “She was my oldest friend, my closest friend. We had been absent friends, sometimes uncertain friends, but so were most sisters and she was the nearest I’d come to having one in this place where families were over-extended” (204).

During the military regime, both of them try to live a normal life. Sheri and Enitan support each other morally whenever they confront difficulties in their personal lives. Sheri is abandoned by her own mother. It really bothers her. She is

raised by her grandmother. She learns to face the world boldly even after her grandmother's death. Sheri comes forward and offers her help voluntarily during Enitan's mother's death.

Women understand the plight of their own gender and provide support, care and help in the time of crisis. Sheri also takes care of Enitan's baby as if she is her own daughter. Even Enitan chooses, "Sheri as her [Yimika's] godmother" (312). Over the years, their friendship has evolved and become stronger. Sheri leaves brigadier's house and concentrates on her flourishing business and Enitan walks out of her marriage to pursue a life where she can freely fulfill her destiny. She becomes an advocate for women prisoners under the dictatorial military rulership on her country. Thus, female friendship inspires Black women to overcome all the hardships and helps them to empower themselves as well as their community.

The conversation between Enitan and Sheri regarding women's place in the society brings out the nature of the treatment given to women. In the patriarchal Nigerian society, women are devoid of central focus and lose their significance in men's life and in society. Sheri points out how women are expected to confine themselves to the kitchen rather than shining in public spheres. In Enitan's pursuit to fight for equality and human rights of people, she compares the condition of women in prison and in society. The women in public are devoid of their basic rights, and Enitan tries to support them in all possible ways by giving them voice. Enitan enumerates the problems of women:

We worry about no money, no light. . . . No husband, bad husband, husband's girlfriend, husband's mother. Human rights were never an issue till the rights of men were threatened. There's nothing in our

constitution for kindness at home. And even if the army goes, we still have our men to answer to. (188)

The plight of the women is still worse because they are marginalised in the society. It needs extra-ordinary courage on the part of women to rise up, raise their voice and fight against the system. Sheri says that if a man attacks her, she would deal with him, finally becomes the victim of rape. The society tests women in all possible ways, and at last physically weakens them but women like Enitan rise above the forces that try to stifle them and move on in their journey. She also encourages Sheri to start her own catering business and live her life independently. Enitan gets the spirit of confidence from her mother. Arin faced many hardships to keep the love between her husband and herself alive and fresh. Psychologically, she finds the church to be her defence mechanism for her broken marriage relationship. With these experiences in mind, her mother advises her daughter not to sacrifice for a man because men are ungrateful by nature, “Never make sacrifices for a man. By the time you say, ‘Look what I’ve done for you’, it’s too late. They never remember” (168).

The relationship between these two young ladies projects an aspect of feminism. Carol Davies describes this bonding as “sisterhood”. Davies speaks of the concept of “sisterhood” in the light of its ability to aid the advancement of women in society. Already cherishing this friendship and the bond of sisterhood, Enitan insists in the affirmative to fastidious Baba that, “she is my friend” (12). To this, she adds a plea and kneels as well. Similar relationships and positive female interaction act as sources of assuagement to suffering women’s psyche and life. In demythologizing and deconstructing the stifling structures in a male-oriented society, Atta instructs women on the way out of retrograde patriarchal domination through the practical actions of gender-assertive Enitan and Sheri.

The female characters such as Enitan and Sheri in *Everything Good Will Come* are projected as the victims of patriarchal authority. It explores the burden of patriarchy and gender discrimination. She persuades Nigerian women to raise their voices both in the private and in the public spheres. She gives emphasis on her ideologies through the character of Enitan. Enitan's vision of life and perspectives on the world becomes sharpened and matured only after her friendship with Sheri.

The friendship between Enitan and Sheri helps them overcome the different patriarchal challenges and political disturbances in their lives. Their friendship provides Enitan and Sheri the moral and emotional support. Enitan and Sheri never allow their religious and ethnic differences affect their friendship. Instead, they strengthen it beyond the differences. Their friendship lasts forever. It serves them to comprehend the world beyond the domestic sphere and also to discover their own identities.

Through the character of Enitan and Sheri, Atta reflects her idea that a woman can stand on her own and need not be dependent on her man for everything. She portrays certain ideological persuasions in the novel. She also challenges the stereotypical literary portrayal of characters by showcasing the prosperity of women who succeed outside the traditional roles of wife and mother. The novel encompasses characters who stand up for their survival and rights which enable them to revisit the conventional set of rules against gender equality. At the end of the novel, Sheri along with Enitan became confident and economically empowered. They proved that women can lead a successful life without the help of men. They liberate from the traditional norms to prove their self-identity. They break the unwanted traditional

norms and liberate themselves from the oppressing patriarchal society. They forget all their differences and remain united. Though their friendship is termed as “unusual”, they stand as the perfect example for true friendship.

The next chapter deals with the sense and smell of Nigeria.

Chapter Four

The Sense and Smell of Nigeria

Sefi Atta could be considered one of the most important women writers of the century and the most influential voice of Nigerian society and literary world. Her loud voice can be heard through her novels which are strong evidences of women's rights, freedom, equality and self-respect. Atta narrates the story based on her ideological persuasions. She occupies a position as a "cultural traveler", projecting the tensions which ensue from the clash between traditionalism and the different phases of modernization in Nigeria. She gives preference to the attempts at subverting stifling cultural practices and socio-economic policies which affect women in particular, and all Nigerians in general. Atta achieves this by creating characters which raise issues that are of cultural, social and political interest to any Nigerian, irrespective of geographical location.

Nigeria is the most populous country in West Africa. It is home for 250 ethnic groups speaking fifty languages. However, the three most dominant tribes in the country are Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. The Hausa dominate the northern region of Nigeria, the Yoruba dominate the southwestern region, and the Igbo dominate the southeastern region. Religious differences endorse the strong division between different regions of Nigeria. The Hausa are predominantly Muslim. The Igbo are mostly Catholic Christians and Yoruba are split between Christians of various denominations and Muslims.

The different tribes of Nigeria operated as separate states with little interactions with each other until its unification and colonization by Great Britain in 1914. During

the colonization of Nigeria by Great Britain, local tribes were used to govern their regions and the British government served as the central power. The Hausa excelled in the military field and made up most of the colony's military forces. Since the trade capitals and oil reserves of Nigeria are located in the south, the Yoruba and Igbo naturally excelled in education and trades. The balance of power was well-regulated by the British so there were little ethnic conflicts.

After gaining independence from British in 1960, the balance of power was maintained through elections and a democratic approach to all national issues. But the situation became volatile with back-to-back military coups that were mostly led by corrupt Hausa military officers. The coups also generated ethnic violence between the different groups and tension was high. In an attempt to rule its own region, the Igbo declared them independent from Nigeria, and named the southeastern region of the nation as Biafra. But since most of Nigeria's valuable natural resources lay in the new “Biafra”, Nigeria refused to recognize the newly formed country, which led to war between Nigeria and Biafra. The war lasted from 1967 to 1970, claiming about three million civilian and military casualties. At the end, the Biafran state was eradicated and discontinued. Although members of the different tribes interact freely all over the nation and equally share political powers, the clear division among tribes leads to civil unrest and rebellion.

Everything Good Will Come is based on true Nigerian culture and political atmosphere. Nigeria is a country endowed with lot of cultural heritages sourced from its multicultural communities. The culture of Nigeria is shaped by Nigeria's multi ethnic groups like Hausas, Yorubas and Igbos. Nigerian culture plays an important role in lives of separate individuals and the society as a whole. Nigerian society is

patriarchal in nature. People give more importance to religious and aesthetic values. *Everything Good Will Come* explores the patriarchal nature of the society as well the religious beliefs and aesthetic values of the people.

Religion and superstitious beliefs plays a major role in forming Nigerian culture. It provides the motivation and the impetus for identity formation and character development. Postcolonial Nigeria contains different religious ideologies. For instance, Enitan's mother, Arin , is a very religious character. Her immersion in charismatic Christianity borders on psychosis. Enitan explains her mother's strange fixation with religion:

I finally understood why she turned her mind to church with such fervor. Had she turned to wine or beer, people would have called her a drunkard. Had she sought other men, they would have called a slut. But to turn to God? Who would quarrel with her? 'Leave her alone,' they would say. "She is religious". (172)

Enitan's father is indifferent towards religion. The stance of Enitan's parents on the question of religion is one of the causes of conflict in the Taiwo family. During one of their quarrels, Sunny says to Arin that, "I can't speak for Him, but I remember He will not be mocked. You want to use the Bible as a shield against everyone? Use it. One day we will both meet our maker. I will tell him all I have done. Then you can tell him what you have done" (17). Enitan confronts with religious indifference on one hand and fanaticism against the backdrop of the Christian faith. Sheri is Enitan's childhood best friend and an indifferent Muslim. Sheri thinks of becoming an actress while Enitan's father insists Enitan must read law. Sheri is exposed to things higher than her age. The events at the picnic lead to Enitan's disillusionment with Sheri. At

the picnic, Enitan is ignored. But Sheri attracts multiple boys and finally she is raped by the boys. Enitan recants and extricates herself from the mishap that befalls the pair. Atta also provides a glimpse into traditional belief in the art of Mike, Enitan's boyfriend. The interplay of the motifs in these cohabiting religions contributes to the comprehension of Enitan's journey towards self.

Enitan learns about the political condition of Nigeria. She joined the Nigerian Student Community in London. Studying law also exposed her to world politics. This social and political awareness equipped her with political consciousness which she exploits to her advantage, Enitan says, “The power of a constitution comes from the respect people give it. If they don’t, then it is words on paper. Nothing else” (73). She comments on the Nigerian socio-economic and political landscape at the time which is affected by corruption and military dictatorship. She says, “Politics in our country was a scuffle between the military and politicians” (72). All the realities that Enitan encounters in her journey to adulthood aims at exposing the social realities which women face daily. Enitan’s ideologies are shaped by her encounter with the society.

Enitan returns to Nigeria with the knowledge which education offered her. Enitan is ready to make choices and accept the consequences which come with them. After attending military training, she works in her father’s firm. Though she worked hard, she remains as a sleeping partner in the firm. She enters into a relationship with Mike Obi, an artist, and later discovers that he is a cheater.

Mike is an artist whose main work is the artistic representation of selected Nigerian gods in sculpture. Nigerian art, traditionally served a social or religious purpose. For example, dance was used to teach or to fulfill some ritualistic goal. Sculpture was used in blessings, in healing rituals, or to ward off bad luck. Enitan is

confronted with the traditional Yoruba and Igbo deities that Mike had sculpted. Mike says, “The Yoruba religion is the most exported African religion” (107). He further explains about the Yoruba religion. He says:

The Yorubas believed that the world was water. The gods came down on a chain carrying a calabash filled with soil, a cockerel, and a chameleon. They poured the soil over the water. The cockerel spread it around, the chameleon walked around to make sure it was safe, other gods came and the world was born. (107)

Enitan is forced to examine her religious beliefs. She reflects on the result of growing up in a background where fanaticism and indifference compete.

Mike teaches Enitan about the religious beliefs of Nigeria. He gives Enitan a new deity. Enitan moves through Mike's pantheon and re-lives her journey. In Mike's pantheon of Nigerian gods, Enitan encounters Oshun, who Mike equates with Aphrodite, whose human incarnation might have been taken to be Sheri. Enitan's exploration of the pantheon of deities which Mike artistically creates is symbolic and becomes a metaphor for Enitan's search for identity. Thus, having put Sheri in her past, Mike's Oshun or Aphrodite does not hold much allure for Enitan. She takes a cursory look at Ala, the Earth mother.

Among the Igbo of Nigeria, Ala, the goddess of the earth, is the divine feminine earth force and the embodiment of the workings of the world. Ala is the head of the Igbo pantheon. Enitan's subtle dismissal of Ala mirrors the passive aggressive way she relegates her mother to the background of her life. In Yoruba cosmogony, Obatala is the god of creation and is traditionally depicted as male figure.

But Mike depicts Obatala as a naked woman with muscular shoulders, in black and white beading.

Obatala, as depicted by Mike occupies the position where gender poles are fused. Therefore, she becomes a linchpin for interrogating gender dynamics within the text. Obatala, as depicted by Mike, is a mix of male and female. In Obatala, the two genders meet without the necessity to demarcate roles. Enitan sets her eyes on Mike's Obatala, in addition to being curious about this genderless place, that is, the place of it and not of her or him, Enitan identifies her with Obatala who is neither male nor female.

With the help of Mike, Enitan learns about Igbo and Yoruba religion. The beauty of the relationship of Enitan and Mike is that in Mike, Enitan finds a mother. She has peace in her relationship with Mike until she walks in on Mike in the middle of an affair. Significantly, in her anger, she does not attack Mike or his lover. She finds Obatala and destroys it, "I raised Obatala above my head, smashed Obatala over the banister, heard her beads pitter-patter down the stairs" (150). Years later when she finds it difficult to conceive, she fears that her sin on demolishing the goddess might have returned to haunt her:

Soon I convinced myself that it was a punishment; something that I'd done, said. I remembered the story of Obatala who once caused women on earth to be barren. I made apologies to her. I remembered also, how I'd opened my mouth once too often and thought that If I said another bad word, had another bad thought, I would remain childless, so I swallowed my voice for penitence. (182)

Both Enitan and Sheri began to recount their experiences in the Nigerian society which is patriarchal in nature. When Enitan asked Sheri if Hassan was treating her well, Sheri is quick to say, “which one of our men really treats women well” (96). She further says:

Better to be ugly, to be crippled, to be a thief even, than to be barren. We had both been raised to believe that our greatest days would be: the birth of our first child, our wedding and graduation days in that order. A woman may be forgiven for having a child out of wedlock if she had no hope of getting married, and she would be dissuaded from getting married if she didn't have a degree. Marriage could immediately wipe out a sluttish past, but angel or not, a woman had to have a child. (97)

In Nigeria, the family is extremely important. Marriage is viewed as a necessary thing to create a family. Children were seen as social security and economic assets. Parents took pride in having many of them. A man, who marries a woman, expects her to give him many children and if the woman could not deliver on this duty, it was sufficient reason, not to divorce, but to take a second or perhaps a third wife. Polygamy is widely accepted. Sheri's suffering is blamed on polygamy. Enitan comes to know that Hassan ill-treats Sheri like a house-girl, so she advises her to leave him.

Nigerian society is patriarchal in nature. Emphasis has always been placed on the male especially in the family system. Males are seen as continuity of both family name and lineage and the men are supposed to be dominant with women being subject to them. Nigerians value male child more than the female child. Arin suffers when she could not give birth to a male child in order to fulfill the society's idea of motherhood.

When she could not, her husband sneaks out to have a male child outside their marriage and Arin is kept in the dark for over 20 years. Enitan's father has other children outside the home and none of the family members knows of it. The most prominent male character in the novel is Sunny, a brutal man who constantly cheats on Arin, yet behaves piously. When Enitan's brother dies, he accuses Arin of her negligence in taking the boy to a church instead of a hospital. Arin's justification never pacifies him:

Your father wouldn't forgive me, kept talking about hospital. Why didn't you take him to hospital... Hospital can't take sickle cell out of a child, hospital cannot make a dying child live. I am not an ignorant woman. There isn't a mother in the world who wouldn't believe that faith can heal her child after medicine has failed.... (169)

Sunny's alienation and unforgiving attitude result in Arin's hypertension, yet he keeps spending more time with other women. When the court eventually dissolves their marriage, Sunny refuses to obey the court's order to transfer one of his houses to Arin. Ironically, Sunny still engages in the fight against the oppressions caused by the military rule, complaining openly about its lawlessness. Unfortunately, just like Nnu Ego in Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* who sacrifices her comforts for her family's well-being but dies ignominiously, Arin is later found dead in her solitary home.

Nigerians follow indigenous set of codes collectively called native law and custom. These laws differ according to the regions as there are divergent ethnic groups in Nigeria. Before civil law came into existence, Nigerians followed the

native law. Polygamy is accepted in native law. After marriage also, a man can bring another woman into his home. Atta says:

If the man dies, under some native customs, his son would inherit his estate instead of his widow. Sometimes, a widow couldn't inherit land at all. Even with the progressive customs, widows inherited according to how many children they had, and sons could have double the rights of daughters. (133)

The need to move out of this patriarchal space becomes expedient. In polygamy, the women are placed in antagonistic position each fighting to prove she is worthy of her dowry. Atta says that new woman marries for love and not to satisfy society's dictates. Both Enitan and Sheri must come out of the limited space to the outer space. Sheri plays a very important role in Enitan's life. She is bold and courageous too. Sheri for instance revolts against Hassan, "Raise your hand to hit Sheri Bakare, and your hand will never be the same again. Stupid man" (165). Now Sheri is not the naive girl who must wait for big Hassan. She moves out of his life and concentrated on her business. Finally she realizes her worth and individuality. As both women experience failures, Enitan soon realizes that she had to pitch tents with her mother and not her father anymore. Her mother advises her, "Never make sacrifices for a man. By the time you say, 'Look what I've done for you', it's too late. They never remember" (168). Her mother resorts to the church as an escape mechanism. Indeed the church helps to cushion the effect of Enitan's mother plight and failed marriage. Enitan's mother lives her life for her husband and now she has lost all, as Enitan puts it, "In my country women are praised the more they surrender their right to protest. In

the end they may die with nothing but selflessness to pass on to their daughters; a startling legacy, like tears down a parched throat” (172).

In Nigeria, a traditional marriage ceremony depends on the payment of a bride price. “Bride price” means a price paid to a bride’s family by the bridegroom in respect of the bride before or at the time of marriage. It can be compared to dowry, which is paid by the groom and used by the bride to help establish the new household. Enitan is also given bride price during her marriage. She says, “On the day of my traditional engagement, I knelt before him according to the rites. He presented a dowry to my family, of hand-woven cloth and gold jewelery” (173). Niyi, Enitan’s husband is a typical African man who is governed by ego rather than reason. He loves his wife and tries to protect her, but at the same time he wants to protect his male ego that he is not under the control of his wife. He pleaded with Enitan and says, “Better watch what you’re saying. Next thing they’ll be calling me woman wrapper. Wrapper was the cloth women tied around their waists. Woman wrapper was a weak man, controlled by his woman” (178). In marriage, Enitan begins to see things clearly and differently too. She began to notice the predicaments of the woman. She becomes assertive and enlightened with a revolutionary spirit.

Niyi represents another male dominant figure in the Nigerian society who believes in absolute submission of women to men, as well as separation of duties. He believes that the kitchen remains the female sphere, hence refuses to lend helping hand to Enitan. As a domineering husband, Niyi bosses Enitan around, even as he sees any disapproval of his views or actions as a challenge to his patriarchal authority. He reinforces the ideas of masculinity which insist that the husbands must be dominating and they should control their wives. When Enitan refuses to take his

advice that she should bother less about her father's incarceration, he engages her in a four-month cold war and even refuses to congratulate her on her thirty-fifth birthday. Niyi bothers less about the psychological effect of his actions on his pregnant wife because he always wanted her submission. Before their divorce, Enitan reflects on her condition of living and her agonies during this period:

Our home was ridiculous. He was carrying on his standoff and I'd retreated fully to the spare room. Silence had become noisy.... I wanted to tell him that a heavy plug had settled at the base of my womb. I wanted to tell him that I was finding it difficult to sleep on my belly at night. I wanted to talk to anyone about my father. (237)

Atta explains that modern women should see themselves as modern wives who must assert their individuality and not live like their mothers. At a point, Enitan begins to educate the women by emphasizing their need to know their rights. Enitan says that women should not serve their husbands. This according to her is a mild form of domestic protest. Atta says that if a woman wishes, she can feed her husband but she should not serve him like god. Atta is not bothered about the society and says that she would continue to tear every notion they had about women. She encourages women to form their own ideologies. It is not an easy process to do but she determines to try hard until the rights of women are assured.

The novel *Everything Good Will Come* has the sense and smell of Nigeria. Though the novel is set in contemporary Nigeria, the characters' lives were shaped by the traditional culture in many ways. Most contemporary Nigerians find it difficult to adjust between their primitive beliefs in certain aspects of their culture and the supposedly modern mode of accepted behaviour. The protagonist, Enitan liberate

herself from the traditional norms of the society to prove her self-identity. With the help of her ideologies, she breaks the unwanted traditional norms to liberate her from the oppressing patriarchal society and becomes an activist by joining the Human Rights group. She is a campaigner not only for women, but for the well being of the nation.

Chapter Five

Summation

Sefi Atta is one of the important contemporary female writers in Nigeria. Her works focus more on women and their problems. She continues to carry the torch borne by women writers like Flora Nwapa, Ifeoma Okoye and Buchi Emecheta who preceded her. Her work has been published widely on the African continent, in the United Kingdom and in the United States. Her writing focuses on the situations in which Nigerians have found themselves and is at once harmoniously poetic and biting frank. The Noma Award 2009 describes Sefi Atta as one of the most original, imaginative and gifted fiction writers in Africa and arguably the best of her generation.

Atta's works of art speak boldly for the emancipation of women and other marginalized sections of her society. They explore themes such as subordination of women, patriarchal dominance, social injustice, polygamy, gender bias, religious intolerance, racial discrimination, ethnic struggles, the desire for selfhood, freedom and social, economic, cultural, political and psychological factors that impede the growth and development of contemporary Nigerian women.

Atta's debut novel, *Everything Good Will Come* is a novel about womanhood and nationhood. It displays certain ideological persuasions which expresses socio-political and gender commitment. Post-Military Nigerian narratives not only deal specifically with the growth process of their protagonist but also equally foreground how the characters negotiate their identity within circumscribed spaces.

Ideological persuasions play an important role in the novel. Some of the spaces where ideological persuasions are negotiated and constructed are religio-cultural traditions, socio-political situations, construct of gender and nation, as well as in multicultural and transnational arenas. Even though she uses Nigeria, her home country, as the heart of the story, the issues discussed therein are microcosmic of human concerns in every time.

Everything Good Will Come is actually a story of a girl who is entangled in a conservative Nigerian society. Post colonial Nigeria which is patriarchal in nature creates a tough space for women to grow and sustain. Every time the heroine loses her identity and she has to struggle hard to identify herself in the midst of her mother's strong religious beliefs and her father's manipulative ways. She is entangled between her mother, Arin and father, Sunny Taiwo. There is another female character Sheri, who also passes through the same struggle. Both these characters have extremely different family background. But they became friends. Their friendship is termed as 'unusual' because of their differences in race, religion, class, culture, background, education, career etc. Enitan was not allowed to lead a normal life because her parents with different views overpowered her with their views. Sheri led a life which is exactly opposite to Enitan. Sheri, the biracial child, has not given any proper advice regarding life. Thus she becomes the victim of a male dominant society.

The novel charts the fate of these two Nigerian girls, one who is prepared to manipulate the traditional system and one who attempts to resist it. Marriage as an institution has great influence in Nigerian society. Both Enitan and Sheri are forced to adopt the system of marriage, but they approached it in diverse ways. Sheri is a dependent and Enitan is a neutral. Sheri believes that as a woman she has to depend

on one man for her existence. But Enitan has a belief that if man wants to be respected he must earn it from his behaviour or attitude towards woman.

Enitan raises her voice against the practice of polygamy especially the act of Sheri's husband who considers her a mere servant. But Sheri never shows the courage to open her mouth. The lack of proper parental training completely ruins her life. That is why she has to go through the tragic plight of losing her pride and virginity. Sheri's docility really ruins her life. After marriage also she follows the inferior position. She has to be silent before her husband's practice of polygamy.

The black women are doubly colonised entities and they have to tolerate all kinds of subjugation and violence not only from their society but also from their own family. They have no good relationship with their husbands based on love. It is evident in the life experiences of the three main lady characters- Enitan, Sheri and Arin. They are physically and mentally tortured and victimized in both their male centered society and by the domination of colonial power.

All the women characters in the novel try their best to have their own identity. Both Enitan and Sheri help each other during their difficult times. Enitan through her words tries to fill assertive spirit in Sheri also. Sheri complains to Enitan about her husband. Enitan advises Sheri to leave her husband. Thus Sheri also becomes assertive and comes out of her limited space to the outer space. Enitan also encourages Sheri to start her own catering business. Sheri follows Enitan's advice and run her catering business and earns money. Thus with the help of her friend, she realizes a woman's worth and the value of her own individuality.

Women were considered as lesser sex and are forced to suffer the high handedness and cruelties of male figures. Sheri, Enitan and Arin are greatly suffered

at the hands of cruelty. Sheri has undergone a traumatic experience. She was the victim of gang rape. Arin has suffered mental breakdown because of her husband's behaviour. Sunny has a son with another wife. He insults Arin and plots to separate Enitan from her mother. Enitan is entangled throughout her life between her mother and father, her personal life and public life. At the end of the novel, she leaves her domineering husband, Niyi and decides to live on her own with her child. She always has her own ideologies and decides according to that. She is very much particular regarding her identity and creates her own identity. She also persuades her friend, Sheri to have her own ideologies. Enitan creates her own identity unafraid of any social entities.

In *Everything Good Will Come*, impact of Nigerian culture and tradition is stressed. Atta tries to buttress how an individual who aims to defy the norms of the society is often muffled and treated with aspersion. Enitan's individuality is regarded as betrayal and disloyal by her educated father to whom women are not expected to partake in activism. Once Enitan engages him in a debate concerning women marginalisation in the society, he looks up at her and says that she is not even qualified to discuss women because besides discussing it there is nothing else she can do to remedy it, not considering her own privileged, spoiled, and sheltered life. In the same vein, when she grants Grace Ameh of the consistently threatened Oracle newspaper an interview, everyone including her husband, Niyi Franco, frowns at it and even goes to the extent of keeping malice with her. Not only that, Atta seems to further question the Nigerian tradition whereby a bride is expected to weep at the point of her departure for her husband's home during wedlock.

Through the character of Enitan, Atta passes the message to future Nigerian women that modern woman must assert their individuality and should fight against

the male atrocities. For making woman strong and dominant one, Atta introduces several strategies through her piece of writing. At a particular moment, Enitan exhorts people to form a group to raise their voice against male oppression. Enitan openly questions all kinds of derogatory things that happened in that society especially the controversial issues of childbearing and joys of motherhood. She blames the concept of evaluating womanhood through motherhood and procreation, where procreation implies the male child principle. If they own male children they can raise their head without any shame. It is a fact that women are dominated by men just like colonized nations dominated by colonizers.

Enitan believes that the ability to make change in society begins with the change that happens in the family. Towards the end of the novel she shows the power of a woman in the role of a female lawyer. She successfully releases his father who has gone under imprisonment due to some political reason. Thus she once again proves the talent of a lady which was once mocked by her own father by commenting her as a senseless girl. Here she also shows the courage to speak and act against corrupted political figures in Nigeria. For Sefi Atta, feminism is all about caring about the other as a human being. This goal is not to dethrone man or enthrone woman on the seat of power.

The new woman is one who is aware of herself as an individual. She is free from her traditional, social and moral constrictions and is able to live with a heightened sense of dignity and individuality. Enitan is the new woman portrayed in the novel. She emerges as a self reliant, emancipated, happy individual who is very confident and assertive. *Everything Good Will Come* redefines Nigerian feminism by presenting us with a woman character who knows what she wants. Enitan is really a promise for future Nigerian feminism because she shows the ability of Nigerian woman to take

her life in her own hands. Enitan never bases her happiness on what others think. She has certain ideological persuasions to live her life.

Everything Good Will Come is a real work that seeks the flourishing of communities with the liberation of women in the background. Through the female characters, Atta is able to shape the vision of an ideal Nigerian woman and also shows how they utilize all means to affirm their individuality. She makes woman to fight for her space both in home and society by abstaining themselves from silence, the destructive metaphor. Post colonial feminism mainly addresses the problems faced by the women in third world countries. It seeks emancipation and empowerment, keeping in minds the cultural differences between the women. Like Wollestonecraft and Margaret Fuller, Sefi Atta too believed in education, employment and political rights of women. It is greatly projected through the protagonist Enitan. Towards the end of the novel through the words of heroine, Atta tells women to adopt female friendship and sisterhood as these would be one of the ways they can win the war against inequality and tradition and all other patriarchal dictates. The novel ends on an optimistic note that 'everything good will come'.

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Reflections of East - West cultures in Anita Desai's Bye - Bye Blackbird

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affiliated to

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

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RASHIBA.C

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PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Alienation and Affliction	13
Three	Identity Crisis	23
Four	Cultural Clash	33
Five	Summation	43
	Works Cited	50

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Reflections of East-West Cultures** in Anita Desai's *Bye – Bye Blackbird*, is Submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the Degree of Master of Arts, is my genuine effort and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

April 2021

C. Rashiba
Rashiba C.

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Reflections of East-West cultures in Anita Desai's *Bye - Bye Blackbird*** highlights the life of the immigrants, who suffer a mixed feeling of love and hate towards their adopted country, in an alien society

The first chapter Introduction gives a short introduction about Indian literature and a brief biographical of Anita Desai and the general characteristics of her works.

The Second Chapter Alienation and Affliction discusses the plights of alienated individuals caught in the crisis of a changing society. Here, Anita Desai excels particularly in highlighting the miserable position of highly sensitive and emotional women, tortured by a humiliating sense neglect, loneliness and desperation.

The Third chapter Identity Crisis with the issues of immigrants and their sufferings to Retain their identity.

The fourth chapter Cultural Clash deals with how he rejects the western culture and society.

The fifth chapter Summation sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It also presents the narrative technique employed by the writer and validates the study.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by ' MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

The term Indian literature is used to refer to the literature produced across the Indian subcontinent. India has powerfully made its presence known to the world, more particularly in the realm of fiction writing. Now it can be claimed without doubt that Indian writing in English has attained distinct credulity. The stream of Indo-Anglican fiction starts with the writings of Bakim Chandra Chatterjee, Toru Dutt, LalBehariDey and Sri Aurobindo.

The beginning of the English literature movement in India was the first three decades of the 19th century and it was a slow incubation. Before the arrival of British in Indian, English was considered as a foreign language. English Language influenced several fields such as education, literature and medium of commucation, to name a few. Indian English Literature refers to work by Indian writers who write in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the many regional and native languages of India. English literature originated in India speaks of their own cultural heritage and value systems. It provides an Oppourtinity to make a deep drive in Indian consciousness and sensibility.

Indian writers, poets, novelists ,essayists, and dramatist have been making crucial contributions to the world literature since Pre- Independence era. It had attained self-sufficient status in the Kingdom of world literature. This movement has continued to reflect Indian culture, tradition, social values and even Indian history through the picture of life in India.

There are critics and commentators in England and America who appreciate Indian English novels. Indian novelist had generated many creative literary works and their works are the greatest contribution to the world literature. Their works considered the issues like nationalism, freedom struggle, social realism, and individual consciousness. Novelists prove their inner creative desire in English language, which is truly an alien tongue for them. Indian novelists overcome the difficulty of writing in a foreign language. They develop the individual style for themselves by learning the nuances of the language. English is not an alien language. It is the language of our intellectual makeup like Sanskrit or Persian.

The first novel in English is Bakim Chandra Chatterjee's Raj Mohan's Wife, appeared in 1864 and created history whose roots have gone deep enough by this day. Bakim's ardent patriotism finds an articulate voice in his Bengal novels Anandamth (1882), Kapalkundal (1885), Durgeshnandhini (1890) and KrishnakantarUyil (1895). Bakim reigned supreme in his lifetime as the literary dictator of nascent Bengal.

Meanwhile, some other Bengalis also become active in writing novels. Raj Lakshmi Devi published her novel, The Hindu Wife in 1876. Toru Dutt published her novel The young Spanish Maiden (1878). H.Dutt produced his Bijoychand in 1888, and Khetrapal chakeavarti's sarata and Hingana appeared in 1895. All these novels have little literary merit in them.

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed a gradual growth in the fictional genre. One of the significant novelists of this time was Romesh Chunder (1848 – 1909) and he has produced six novels in Bengali, two social

and four historical ones, out of which he translated, *The Lake of Psalms* (1902) and *The slave girl of Agra* (1909) on to English. Both the novels of Romesh published in London have admirably woven plots and depict their characters vividly.

One distinguished name to be mentioned here is that of Rabindranath Tagore, a prolific writer with at least two hundred songs, several plays and numerous novels to his credit. Some of his have since been regarded into English. *The Home and The World* (1919), *The Wreck* (1921), and *Gora* (1923) all of which are socially relevant and thought provoking. Through these novels, Tagore has conjured up the vision of a modern India. He won the Noble Prize for his master piece *Gitanjali*. The time was ripe for the emergence of a few talented writers of Indo – English fiction. The trio of Indian Writing in English are Mulk Raj Anand (1905), R.K.Narayan (1906) and Raja RAO (1909).

R.K.Narayan, whose first novel *Swami and Friends* appeared in 1935, is one of the most unpretentious and unassuming novelist. *The Financial Expert* (1952) and *The Guide* are the two grand successes of Narayan as a novelist. Raja Rao has produced four novels and two collections of short story: *Kanthapura* (1938), *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965) and *Comrade Kirillov* (1976), *The Cow of the Barricades* (1947) and *The Police Man and the Rose* (1978).

Bhabani Bhattacharya (1906) has published six novels to this day. So many *Hungers* (1947), *Music for Mohini* (1952), *He Who Rides a Tiger* (1954), *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960), *Shadow from Ladakh* (1966) and *A Dream in*

Hawii (1978). A Sahitya Academy Award to him in 1967 was a fitting recognition of his merits. Ruth Prawar Jhawala (1972) has written a fairly good number of novels.

In all her novels, she is concerned primarily with an analysis of domestic fiction with an evaluation of the extent to which the western culture pervades the life of Indians. Khuswant Singh is another novelist of the fifties. His two novels, *Train to Pakistan* and *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* (1959) depict the tragic circumstances leading to India's partition in 1947. One of the great interesting novelist of modern India is Manohar Malgonkar. He has written novels like *Distant Drum* (1906), *Combat of shadows* (1960), *The Princess* (1963), and *The Devil's Wind* (1972). His favourite themes are Indian history, Indo - British conflict for freedom and Non - Violence.

Nayanthara Sahgal (1927) entered the literary arena with her autobiographical *Prison and Chocolate Cake* (1954), which was followed by a few more novels. *A Time To Be Happy* (1958), *From Fear Set Free* (1962), *This Time of Morning* (1965), *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) and the *Day in Shadow* (1971).

Chaman Nahal is a Sahitya Academy Award Winner and has three novels to his credit. Those are *My True Faces* (1973), *Azadi* (1975), and *Into another Dawan* (1977). Two Distinguished Poets, Kamala Das and Shiv. K. Kumar have also written novels. Kamala Das's *The Alphabet of Lust* is a satire on the greed of an ambitious woman.

Kamala Markandya (1924) has written nine novels to her credit. Her two novels, *A Handfull of Rice* (1906) and *Nectar in a Steve* (1954) offer a

picture of real society and portray the experiences of the slimy poverty. Desai has added new dimension to contemporary Indian English fiction, in general and Indian English fiction by Women in particular. Her works are different from those of the other Indian women writers as she is more interested in the portrayal of inner world of her protagonists than the political and social realms.

Desai, the novelist, short story writer, children's author was born in 1937 in Mussorie, India to an Indian father and a German mother. Her mixed background has enabled Desai to view India from something of an outsider's perspective to see India both as Indians and as non Indians see it. She spent much of her initial life in New Delhi and completed her initial education there. She teaches at MIT(USA). She has been awarded Sahitya Academy Award for her novel *Fire on the Mountain* among several other awards. Desai began her career as a short story writer.

Her stories were published from time to time in outstanding Indian magazines. Her first story was 'Circus Cat, Alley Cat' was published in 1957. Later on, every year her story was published in the same or different periodicals and in this way she established herself as a writer. Her short stories 'Grand Mother' (1960), 'An Examination' (1960), 'Ghost House' (1961), 'Mr. Boss Private Bliss in Envoy' was published by Writer's Workshop.

Desai's collection of short stories presented topics are published in 1978, which includes a number of stories just a 'Pineapple Cake', 'Sale', 'The Accompanist', 'A Devoted Son', 'The Farewell Party', 'Regions At Day

Break', 'Scholar Gypsy', 'Private Tutor by Mr. Bose' and 'Surface Texture' etc.

Desai's literary interest was outstanding as it was not confined to the story writing only. She also emerged as a promising novelist in the year 1963 by the publication of her first novel *Cry, The Peacock*. Her novels are presentation of social realities from a psychological perspective. She closely examines the emotional world of female class. In *Cry, the Peacock*, the heroine is a neurotic young woman. She is the daughter of a wealthy Brahman and is married to Gautama. He is an insensitive, pragmatic and rational advocate who does not understand her sensitive nature.

In her childhood an albino astrologer had declared that four years after her marriage one of them would die and the prediction makes her obsessed by the fear of death. She wants that one of the two could be Gautama and she kills by pushing him off the parapet. In *Voices in the city* (1965), the main characters are Nirode and his sisters Amla and Monisha who are deeply tortured by their meaningless and hollow existence. Nirode is a person who meets failure after failure. He refuses to make even the most necessary compromises that life demanded. His elder sister Monisha is married to a blind moralist, Jiban. Arun, his brother has married a blue eyed nurse returns home. The younger sister, Amla is a real extrovert like her brother and sister. She decided to lead a gay life with the painter. Monisha finds the struggle too difficult to continue the journey of life and puts an end to her life. But Monisha's death

illuminates Nirodes mind and he makes progress towards acceptance from negation of life.

In *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), Anita Desai presents three female characters, the aged Nanda Kaul, Raka and Ila Das. Nanda Kaul lives in summer villa in the foothills of the Himalayas after the death of her Husband, a university Vice Chancellor. Now, she has sided herself totally from the world and now wants to remain alone and nothing else.

Both Nanda and her grand daughter Raka attempt to live together, avoiding each other but the total seclusion of Taka brings a sort of self-realization and metamorphosis in Nanda's attitude and she begins to woo Raka with long stories about her imaginary childhood. Ila Das, Nanda's childhood friend is a humorous unmarried woman. Her life represents another aspect of movement. Her barren unfulfilled life is contrary of that of Nanda Kaul. There is an irony in her tragic death. The grim reality of Ila Das' rape and murder completely shatters the unreality of Nanda Kaul's projected reverie.

Clear Light of Day (1980) is about the development of four children in an apparently absurd and grey world of New Delhi family. Two young girls, Bim and Tara have to follow a diabetic mother, a father and a mentally retarded brother. They have the responsibility of tending to young sick brother and an alcoholic old aunt. This domestic drama of miseries takes place against the back ground of the partition of the country suggesting another pattern of violence, blood shed and absurdity. The death of the parents leaves the children emotionally helpless. Tara gets

married and goes abroad. Raja, the elder brother gets married to the daughter of their Muslim neighbor Hyder Ali. He goes from Delhi and settles down in Hyderabad, and it is Bim who is left to look after the house and the mentally retarded Baba.

Devan, the protagonist of *In Custody* (1984) reveals the stage next to Bim's in psychic balance and wholeness. He is a temporary lecturer in Hindi in a private college on Mirpore a suburb in Delhi. Devan is very much interested in Urdu literature. As the novel opens his friend Murad editor of an Urdu magazine, requests Devan to interview NurShahjehanabad. The rest of narrative chandess between Devan's success and failure, his enthusiasm and hesitancy and the final disaster he lands into. And finally he stands at a cross - road not knowing where to turn. In the end he finds power in his inner self and he is ready to face life as it comes to him. All through the novel socio - economic factor colours his personality and makes his psyche confused.

In Baumgartner's *Bombay* (1988), Desai lays stress on Hugo's homelessness through the image of cats. The locale of the novel is Germany and India. The first chapter of the novel uses flashback technique from the present to the past. Hugo's childhood is remembered through many German songs and poems which are scattered throughout the novel. Anita Desai has done justice to present the mind of Baumgartner, his confusion, his maladjustment both in his own country and his adopted nation.

Desai's latest novel *Journey to Ithaca* (1995) reveals the theme of Indian spirituality. India, more specifically spiritual India appears as a

kind of Ithaka. The novel reveals the journey of two characters Matteo and Lila searching for enlightenment.

Fasting Feasting (1999) describes Arun, and his sisters, Aruna and Uma. Uma is mentally retarded. Marriage proposals are not coming, so later on Uma was married to a man who was a father of four children. Uma leads a burdened life. Desai presents the psyche, that a divorced daughter is a very great burden even than the unmarried daughter. Aruna had been married to a very handsome brilliant person. Trivial quality of joy in Aruna's life is presented. She is equally sad. Feasting by Aruna never gives a good taste and fasting by Uma cannot give her satisfaction. Another character Melony, daughter of an American family suffers from psychosis. She undergoes treatment and then she is cured.

To Desai, writing is a means of discovering one's identity. Narayan's use of irony, Raja Rao's acceptance of Indian metaphysics is irrelevant to Desai's fictional needs. Even the doctrinaire humanism of Anand and the sanguine exploits of Kushwant Singh and Malgonkar are alien to her art of fiction. Her work clearly indicates the direction Indian fiction was taking in the hands of the third generation of urban writers. What matters to her is the character and not the tale, the situation and not the environment, the depth and not the dimension. Professor Jaspir Jais rightly points out:

The world of Desai's novels is an ambivalent one. It is a world where the harmony is aspired to but not arrived at, and the desire to love and live clashes - at times violently - with the desire to withdraw and

achieve harmony. Involvement and stillness are incompatible by their nature, yet they strive to exist together.

Desai's novels expose man's perennial dilemmas: love versus hate; action versus inaction; possessiveness versus renunciation. They are mainly concerned about things that every individual long for the courage to live and the capacity to love as well as to be loved. Usha Bande comments on Anita Desai in her book, *The Novels of Anita Desai: A Study in character and conflict*. She says:

As an artist, Desai handles the raw material of life and convey it through a pattern and design. Writing itself is a quest for meaning, for value and for truth. She is as much interested in life with its hopes, frustrations, concerned with art to give shape, purpose and wholeness to life.

In the novels of Desai the interior of the human being forms the core of scrutiny. Unlike, Ruth Jhabvala who gives graphic details about reality, Anita Desai is interested in the study of the lives. Kunj Bala Goel in his book, *The language and theme in Anita Desai's fiction* observes,

Desai is primarily interested in the portrayal of female protagonists as living in separate, closed, sequestered worlds of existential problems and passion. Each individual is portrayed as an unsolved mystery, being hyper-sensitive, solitary and introspective. Desai's female characters are not traditional rather they come alive in their dynamic process, always probing and changing, viable and mutable.

In Desai's third novel, *Bye - Bye Blackbird*, the action shifts to England. The novel, like the two earlier works, has a tripartite structure: arrival, "Discovery and Recognition," and "Departure". The three main characters are Dev, who has recently arrived in London from India when the novel begins, his friend Adit, with whom he is staying, and Adit's British wife, Sarah. All three characters are in conflict with their environment. Sarah is an unstable wife who finds herself playing two roles, that of an Indian at home and that of a Britisher outside; all the while, she questions who she really is. Dev and Adit are, in a sense, doubles like Nirode and Amla. Dev is the more cynical and aggressive of the two, while Adit, though essentially the same, is muted at the beginning. The novel follows a pattern like that of Henry James's *The Ambassadors* (1903). Adit, who thought he had felt at home in England, returns to India, while Dev, the militant Cynic who has reviled Adit for staying, takes Adit's place after his departure, accepting a job in Adit's firm and moving to Adit's apartment.

Chapter Two

Alienation and Affliction

Anita Desai excels in writing psychological novels. She would, however call them "purely subjective". "It has been my personal luck," she confides "that my temperament and circumstances have combined to give me the shelter, privacy and solitude required for the writing of such novels, thereby avoiding problems a more objective writer has to deal with since he depends on observation rather than a private vision." "It is this private vision" that she tries to encapsulate in her novels. Her writing the reveals inner realities and psychic reverberations of her characters. As Iyenger points out, "Her forte is the exploration of sensibility the particular kind of modern Indian sensibility that is ill at ease" in a sterile set up. In an interview, however, Desai denied to have deliberately tried to "incorporate any aspects of the "modern sensibility" in her novels. She says that she writes about the contemporary scene and therefore the characters must contain the modern sensibility. The predicament of the modern man seems to be one of the dominant interests of the novelists. Probably the most recurrent theme in her novels is "the hazards and complexities of individuality, and the establishing of individualism" of her characters. Few Indian writers in English have surpassed Desai in respect of psychological delineation of the protagonist.

Alienation is the process whereby people become foreign to the world they are living in. The concept of alienation is deeply embedded in all the great religions and social and political theories of the civilized epoch, namely the idea that some time in the past people lived in harmony, and then there was some kind of rupture which left people feeling like foreigners in the world, but sometime in the future this alienation would be overcome and humanity would again live in harmony with itself

and Nature. Marx had a specific understanding of the very sharp experience of alienation which is found in modern bourgeois society. Marx developed this understanding through his critique of Hegel.

Anita Desai's novel *Bye - Bye Black Bird*, captures the confusions and conflicts of another set of alienated persons. It has rightly been maintained that in the novel the tension between the local and the immigrant blackbird involves issues of alienation and accommodation that the immigrant has to confront in an alien and yet familiar world. In this novel Desai seeks to explore the complexities of the dilemma of alienated immigration by focusing upon its attraction as well as repulsions. In the novel there is xenophobia or dislike for the foreigners and its focuses on the socio-political and communal values or biases which make the life of an individual a veritable hell in an alienated world.

The novel *Bye - Bye Blackbird*, is an authentic study of human relationship bedeviled by exile and cultural encounters. The focus of *Bye - Bye Blackbird* is on Dev who comes to London to pursue his studies. As the plot develops, one can find him turning into a completely disillusioned man. He feels alienated in London from both Indians and English men. There is a lack of sympathy in English men, who do not, recognize their neighbours and behave with them like strangers. The silence and hollowness in London disturbs Dev and makes him uneasy and alienated. He finds himself insulted and isolated. He realizes that the Indian immigrants rush to the West and in the process miss badly their own mother land. He feels extremely suffocated in the Tube station and considers himself, "like a kafka Stranger wondering through the dark labyrinth at a prison" (Bye 57).

The absurdities of Dev's existence of England and its drab superficialities have been recorded by the novelist with accuracy and detachment in a poetic and humorous language. Dev's longing for living with its variety and multiplicity remains unsatisfied in the new atmosphere where "everyone is a stranger and lives in hiding." This is a world which makes him nostalgic about India the India of familiar faces, familiar sounds and familiar smells. Dev is particularly with the treatment accorded to immigrants in England. They are openly insulted, so much so that they are not allowed to use a lavatory meant for the English "The London docks have three kinds of lavatories Ladies, Gents and Asiatic." He gives vent to his feelings candidly when he tells Adit: "I wouldn't live in a country where I was insulted and unwanted." The silence and emptiness of the houses and streets in London make him uneasy: "The English habit of keeping all doors and windows tightly shut of guarding their privacy as they guarded their tongues" remains incomprehensible to him. He finds even a thickly populated place like London "utterly silent, deserted a cold wasteland of brick and tile." Dev's alienation and spiritual agony are objected in his hellish experiences in the London tube:

Dev ventures in to the city. He desends, deeper and deeper, into the white-tiled bowels of Clapham tube station. The meaning slither of escalators strikes panic into a speechless Dev as he is swept down with an awful sensation of being taken where he does not want to go. Down, down and farther down like Alice falling, falling down the rabbit hole, like a Kafka stranger wandering through the dark labyrinth of a prison. (63 - 64)

In his uncertainty, he develops a schizophrenic attitude to English. He is agonized when he has to face "a tumult inside him, a growing bewilderment, a kind of schizophrenic that wakes him in the middle of the night and shadows him by day." (96) Ultimately, however, Dev loses self-control and is caught under England's spell. He changes places with Adit, whom he derided as "Boot – licking toddy" and Spineless imperialist – lover." [21]. Surprisingly, enough Adit's attitude to England also undergoes a profound change. He longs to go back to India. His nostalgia for his country is intentioned by his experience of visit to his in – laws, which was "marred by tactlessness, by inane misunderstandings, by loud underlining of the basic disharmony of the situation." [199]. His feeling acquires a threatening dimension, giving him the feeling of "an illness, an ache." He frankly admits to be "a stranger, a non-belonger" in England, "hunted out by the black sensation of not belonging." [206]. He would be delighted if he saw by any chance an essentric, unruly and unplanned anything Indian at all." He accuses his English wife, Sarah, of xenophobia.

Another character that deserves mention in his content is Sarah. Although her plight has not been treated in detail, there are certain significant clues to her problems, which , when collated present a very lonely and helpless person. She is culturally alienated and her marriage to a "wog" obliges her to keep "to the loneliest path" and walk "drawing across her face a mask of secrecy." "Those who glanced at her made aware of her by the violence with which she turned away from them felt apprehensive, but, since she was a stranger, gave it no thought." [34]. Her main problem is to know her identity in precious terms. Her married life begins to play roles to hoodwink people and even herself. She would knowing too well that she is parading "like an impostor, to make claims to a life, an identity that she did not herself feel to be her own." This acting out of rolles tells upon her nerves and she

feels" so cut and slashed into living, bleeding piece". By the time they move to live in a new house, Adit retires from Sarah's life as well. Herself puzzled by her husband's bewilderment, she begins to have a clear idea of her miserable life:

"It was as though she had chosen to be cast out of her home, her background, and would not be drawn back to it, not even by her husband. She began to drift, round and round, heavily and giddily, as though caught in a slow whirlpool of dark, deep water." (170)

The "unreality" about Dev and Sarah life swamps the "Paper Walls" of their fort "turning them soggy, making the pages float away on dim waves," and despite all their questionings, they are not going to get rid of their predicament. Sarah represents, all immigrants' wives who have their own problems of adjustments when placed in the contexts of cultures at loggerheads. Their fate is worse than that of them, he has atleast "some positive destination." However embarrassing sometimes the position of people like Sarah can be:

They had learnt exactly how much of his foreign world was theirs to tread and had given up their early attempts made out of curiosity and a desire to join, to interpret jokes which seemed to depend entirely on such matters as a Bengali's accent or a Punjabi's eating habits or a Bihari's intellectual limitations of which they naturally had no experience or comprehension. (28)

It is this incomprehension which leads such persons to rootlessness. People like Dev and Sarah cannot belong to a world. It is their nature and destiny to hang between the two worlds Indian and European, and to be torn by their conflicting loyalties. *Bye - Bye, Blackbird* had immense possibilities of being a great novel of profound

psychological delineation. It is pity that the novelist could not fully make the most of the opportunity given to her. The interplay of the characters, their cultures and motives, the crisis faced by each one of them and the resultant problems of disorientation have not been given as much attention as they should have been.

In her novels Anita Desai has moved from alienation to a "mythic acceptance" of life and its myriad problems." However, even the last novel possesses lineaments of existential novel and continues to unravel the problem of alienation, in its various forms, candidly and closely and describes its individual and social effects without mincing words. These novels present, like the earlier ones, the essential tragedy of modern India, which the novelist sees as the loss of the truly human beneath the welter of impersonal social forces.

In *Bye – Bye Blackbird* Anita Desai has deals with this complex problems of alienation. The novel is mainly woven round two groups of characters, Adit Sen, his English wife Sarah, the Indian friend Dev; and Jasbir-Mala, Sammar – Bella. The problems arise with the rehabilitation of Adit, Sarah and Dev, the new arrival with the view of studying in the London School of Economics. After coming to England, Adit worked in different capacities in a post office, in the sorting office. Then he joined camping equipment business. He also worked as a teacher, and finally accepted a little job at blue Skies. He is happy with his job and expects to be Director one day. He also finds himself lucky to have Sarah as his wife. We can see happy state through his expressions.

Dev holds quite opposite view of India. Sometimes back before being engaged to sarah, he had been to India for job. But within four months 'period he could find only a ruddy clercking job' at the salary of two hundred and fifty rupees and possibly

risks to five hundred after thirty years. Besides, he hated the laziness of the clerks and the unpunctuality of the buses and trains, and the beggars and the flies and the stench – and the boredom in India'. He is also sure of the fact that "nothing ever goes right at home there is famine or flood, there is drought or epidemic always", while in England the rains fall so softly and evenly. The sun is mild, the earth is fertile. The rivers are full. This suggests the smooth completion.

But in spite of this apparent attraction for England and repulsion for India, somewhere deep down Adit continues his attachment for his Motherland. His longing for India is evident in the following lines:

When I have a whole month of leave saved up, I will go. My mother will cook hilsa fish wrapped in banana leaves for me. My sisters will dress Sarah in saris and gold ornaments. I will lie in bed till ten every morning and sit up half the nights listening to the *sehnai* and *Sitar* (P.49).

Adit not only loves and admires England, but also loves everything that is English, appreciates her history and poetry. He feels the thrill about Nelson's battles, Waterloo, about Churchill all, and yet all this breaks like a soap bubble at the first touch of reality. Adit must have not loved England less but then he loved India more. The *sanskars* etched on his subconscious and his underflowing stream of love for India burst forth.

Pakistan's war against India proves to be catalytic. It becomes an urgent call announcing the Mother India in distress. He loses all interest in English life. He is greatly roused. Even Sarah wonders how Adit 'keeps that amount of yearning shut up and enclosed inside him for a long time' (p.184)

It is also obvious that it was not the occasional slights and insults directed against him as a stranger, a non-belonger, that had finally proved too much for him, but the placidity, the munificence and the ease of England. Adit who once sees all gold in England, now sees 'the falsehood, the fakery, and the unnatural strain of it all'. Now his own education, his 'feel' for British history and poetry fall away from him 'like a coat that has been secretly undermined by months'. He sees himself as 'an outsider not only by virtue of his colour but by an imagination run amuck'.

Adit after a long inward debate finally declares; 'No-England.' England, I have done with England now, Sarah, I am going back. To India -home'(p.203). This declaration greatly perturbs Sarah. But now Adit is firm. He must be in India. The reason that he gives for his going is as follows;

I can't live here any more. Our lives here-they have been so unreal, don't you feel it. Little India in London. All our records and lamb curries and singsongs, it's all so unreal. I am twenty seven now. I've to go home and start living in a real life. I don't know what real life there will mean. Sarah, you know I've loved England more than you. I've often felt myself half English but it was only a pretence, Sally. Now it has to be the real thing. I must go. You will come (p.204).

When Sarah announces her pregnancy, Adit immediately forwards his wish that his son would be born in India. Sarah is caught in a tragic situation. She is the only daughter of a middle class couple at Hampshire, a beautiful countryside. She is highly sensitive. She is greatly shaped by the countryside innocence and beauty. And when Adit declares his decision to go back to India, Sarah has three challenges before her: 'There was the baby. There was the voyage. And The uprooting' Regarding uprooting

she somehow consoles herself : ' I think when I go to India, I will not find it to strange after all. I am sure I shall feel quite at home very soon' (p.219). But then soon she feels an assurance and certainty melting inside her. Her courage shrinks inside her into 'a single drop of rain, a flake of ice.' And it appears to her that going to India would mean 'all the pangs of saying good-bye to her past twenty four years'. The idea of going back to India triggers her mind thus:

It was English self that was receding and fading and dying, she knew, it was her English self to which she must say good-bye. That was what hurt – not saying good-bye to England, because England would remain at it was. English, she whispered, and then her instinctive reaction was to clutch at some thing and hold on to what was slipping through her fingers already (p.221).

Anita Desai has obviously presented four types of people with regard to the problem of alienation. The first category is the people who get rehabilitated to the new place soon without any obstacle, eg. Jasbir-Mala, Sammar-Bella. Secondly Those who initially appear to be rehabilitated to any new place but at heart continue vacillating between this and that, e.g., Adit. The third category is people who feel like getting rehabilitated to any new place but remain trembling like a leaf within, e.g., Dev. Outwardly, the sensitivity, Samskars, and certain conditions seem to be affecting the process of rehabilitation to the new place generating restlessness and instability. The novelist has closed the matter at this point.

However, it is desirable to review this problem further by considering the questions : What is the real cause of the feeling of alienation? Is the feeling of alienation in Adit, Sarah and Dev different from eachother? Why is it not found in

Jasbir-Mala, Sammar-Bella? Can everyone overcome this feeling and be rehabilitated to any place? The writer has kept such questions outside the purview of this novel.

Its simple meaning is that when a mirror is coated with dust, it can't reflect the image. But when that dirt is removed, and the mirror gets clean, it shines and reflects the image again. The same is applicable to mind. That is, when man's mind gets coated by wordly involvements, he fails to see his 'real self' and feel free from any sorrow. So the problem with the characters in *Bye-Bye Blackbird* is that they are very much involved in the material world around taking it as real and this becomes the cause of their feeling of alienation. However, the scale of coating is different in different characters leading to the different scales of alienation. That is, less coating, more intense is the feeling of alienation and more coating, less or no feeling of alienation. The coating is thick in the case of Jasbir-Mala, Sammar-Bella, and so they lead happy-go-lucky life in England. The coating is less in the case of Adit and Dev and still less in Sarah, and they feel through a pinch of alienation accordingly. In this Anita Desai excels particularly in highlighting sense of neglect, of loneliness and of desperation. The existential problem of the alienated self finally emerges to be the central theme of her novels.

The third chapter discusses the lives of immigrants and their sufferings in detail.

Chapter Three

Identity Crisis

Anita Desai in *Bye-Bye Blackbird* describes the life and experiences of Indian immigrants in England where they are treated as others. Just as the United States of America, the United Kingdom has also attracted Indians as a destination of educational and financial richness. Adit, the chief protagonist has settled in London, the land of opportunities. He faces existential problems which have cropped up from cultural and racial differences, and discloses the sickness, nostalgia and longingness to the native land but at the end of the novel he comes to conclusion that this English identity has been vanishing and disappearing. In order to attain his true identity and to have a real life Adit has to go to India, his native place. Dev, his friend who visits his country, remains behind.

Adit, born in a middle class family, goes to England to enjoy his freedom. He falls in love with a English girl, Sarah, and gets married to her. It is a love at first sight and in the very first meeting itself he expresses his love to her. He changes himself wholly to the expectations of England and completely accepts the lifestyle of the Britishers. Their life is running smoothly when a young man of twenty-two Dev, comes to them from Calcutta to seek admission in London School of Economics. Dev who is aware of British colonialism comes to England and wants to go back as an England-returned teacher. Adit is proud of his blind appreciation of England. He feels that he has every right to enjoy and have a good time there. He treats the insulting comments of the natives as small inconveniences and turns a deaf ear to them as he has developed a love for Western style of living and even tolerates being called a wog. He contrasts England with his own native land and bluntly criticizes his

motherland." He tells Dev that he is very much contented with his life in England, "I love it here, I'm so happy here I hardly notice the few drawbacks...like being called a wog...." (19-20).

Ironically, Adit's efforts to change himself as a Westernized person do not last for long. Wherever he sets off, he happens to be upset by racial discrimination and is frequently looked as a second grade citizen in his overwhelming future. He has to get on with it as long as he desires to stay in England. He recognizes that in spite of his best efforts he cannot achieve the top post in his office for the reason that he is an Indian, an unwanted expatriate in an alien country and his fate is to listen to the mocking comments of the Britishers. The Indian culture in which he has been brought up gradually overpowers his consciousness and develops in him a longing to return to his motherland.

Desai sensitively portrays the psychological effects on Sarah, Adit's Anglo-Saxon wife who has to suffer and face discrimination for getting married to an Indian, in an effort to acculturate herself to her husband's way of life, grows almost alienated from her own people. When Adit asks her whether she would be able to go to India leaving England she says she can leave at once. Adit longs to escape from England where he has been tagged as an Indian immigrant. In spite of his love and respect for England, he feels himself as an alien and the Indianness which is deep-rooted in him pours out and makes him nostalgic, "Our lives here, they have so unreal, don't you feel it? Little India in London. All our records and lamb curries and sing-songs, it's all so unreal. It has no reality at all,..... I've got to go home and start living a real life." (198). He attempts to raise funds during India's war with Pakistan and it is during the war that he takes the major resolution that he has to go to India along with Sarah. With enormous expectations and desires, he moves about to India, his own

land where no one can call him a wog or look down upon him. The circle of his migration comes to an end from India to England and again to India.

Dev, is another immigrant who comes to England to pursue his higher studies. On his first day in England he notices the difference between his country and England. He realizes that unlike India, England is an unsympathetic country. The first lesson that he learns there is that one must do one's work as nobody does anything for anyone. He feels alienated in London from both Indians and Englishmen. He finds it very difficult to adjust himself with the new surroundings.

He constantly condemns Britain and the Britishers. The cultural differences widen and Dev moves out in search of a job. He undergoes various experiences and cultural shocks. The difference between expectation and reality disturbs him and makes him feel self-conscious. He thinks that it is pity for him to have to come all the way to London for a proper education. He further sees that the neighbours are rather silent.

If this were India....I would by now know all my neighbours even if I had never spoken to them. I'd Know their taste in music by the sound of its howling. I'd Know if the older children were studying for exams by the sound of lessons being recited . (58)

In London the circumstances are different. The people live silently and invisibly which is a rare scene in India. Though in the beginning, he is determined that he cannot stay in England where he has to bear all the insults and tell vehemently to Adit, "I wouldn't live in a country where I was insulted and unwanted"(19), there is a slow hidden change in his thoughts.

Anita Desai confers an opportunity of deep access into his awareness. She observes, "At that moment England had ceased to be an aggressor who tried to enmesh, subjugate and victimize him with weapons of the Empire" and he no longer sees it with the eye of a member of a once conquered race....but of someone before whom vistas of love success and joy had opened" (223). Instead of quitting the job and going back to India with Adit, he stays in England and joins the tourist bureau in which Adit was previously working. Instead of grasping that he also has to go through all the abuses, hurts and mental torture, which Adit has been facing, he thinks with his joining in the new job, chances of his return to India have been lessened: To quote:

The characters moving from one country to another imposes to get use to a new way of life and very often they are seen under pressure to merge with the new culture. Dislocation from the native country to another is characteristics feature of the novel. Adit who undergoes dislocation tries utmost to be one with the new culture and relocates when he realizes the grim reality of being an alien in England. "The people of diaspora therefore, all carry to varying degrees an opposition...between a state of alienation and a desire to return.... A conjunction of past and present: the exotic and everyday, in a radically destabilized from" (Hodge 389).

Anita Desai, who is recognized for her novelty and wits, is one of them. Her women characters are real flesh and blood protagonists. She has covered the all sphere of social institutions like relationships, development, structure and interaction. She has left no corner unturned to explain how people relate to each other, as well as how much the society is responsible to shape a man's behaviour and attitudes. She has knitted her thoughts equally well about the world of men. She expresses her view

again and again well as in the family. She holds a significant place in modern Indian English novel.

Desai achieves that difficult task of moulding the English Language and idiom to her purpose without a self-conscious Attempt of sounding Indian. Known for her sensitivity in the Structuring of the pattern of her novels, integrity of artistic Vision, imaginative mind, keen observation, sharp awareness, And competent craftsmanship, she has become a much sought After writer-sought after by publishers and readers alike.

Anita Desai's novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1971) portrays the plight of Indian immigrants in London. The novel explores the 'Arrival', 'Finding and Recognition' and 'Departure'. It describes cultural and cross-cultural encounters in the lives of three major characters, namely, Adit, his British wife, Sarah and his friend, Dev. Dev arrives in England for higher studies, and stays with Adit and Sarah. He is puzzled when he finds Indians humiliated in both public and private places. In the second part he is changed. He begins to feel a charm for the country. In the third part Adit develops homesickness for India. Dev stays on there.

Adit comes to England and marries an English lady, Sarah. Having a job and wife, he leads a happy life there. After some time, his friend Dev comes to England for higher education but he does not like the pomp and show of England. Adit faces racial discrimination and cosmopolitanism. From the beginning of the novel he likes the western way of life but while living in England he shows his disgust towards the way of European life and particularly of England. Adit tries to be sensible to the country he inhabits and he exists for his future. Having a flat, a middle job in a travel

agency and a white well-matched wife, he seems content with his fascination with the white cultural more. Desai sensibly describes his narrow-minded conceit in acquiring a white bride:

These English wives are quite manageable rally, you know. Not as fierce as the look – very quiet and hardworking as long as you treat them right and roar at them regularly once or twice a week. (31)

Dev comes to England only for his education. As a matter of fact he observes the basic distinction of social and educational factors between the East and the West. He becomes eager to be an England-returned teacher and at the same time shows his abhorrence to the social system of England. He hate the men and manners of England; but his stay there for a while intensifies his leanings to the country. England changes his Anglophobia extreme fear into an anglophile. He develops a great fascination for the English people. Adit on the other hand becomes nostalgic about his childhood memories and longs intensely for his native country India.

Sarah, wishes to keep her Indian association a secret in the place where she works because of her marriage with Adit sen. She has a fear syndrome of her marriage with him. She is a poor conservationist, reserved and self-conscious of touch and contact, and violently turns away from those who glance at her, and keeps to the loneliest path. She is struggling against the odds. Dev and Adit encounter the racial discrimination but Sarah's estrangement is much more complicated. By marrying a non-white, she has broken the social code and all the more so, having married an Indian, one from the country which was once a British colony. She is ridiculed by her colleagues.

Adit is puzzled by the plight of refusal of his wife to meet her old friends and acquaintances that she wants to remain alone causes trouble for Adit. After marriage

she starts to undermine her past life. She has a dependency syndrome and she fears the world, their looks and enquiries. She feels secure once she enters her room at school. At school, she moves comfortably assured performing her duty smoothly. Her anxiety, her fears all vanish once she takes up her role of the Head's secretary. To know India and to become Indian are her secrets. When Adit decides to go back to India, she consents to follow him like a typical Hindu wife. Before marriage, Adit once remarked: "You are like a Bengali girl.... Bengali women are like that Reserved, quite. May be you were one in your previous life (74)."

Adit has now also an obsession for his native land, India. The treatment given out to the Indians there in England has forced him to take a sudden decision and to make a brave effort to go back to India. However, Sarah's decision to go to India with her husband is born of any illusion. Her people do not encourage her. Even the Indians talk about the problems she may have to face, but she is not at all terrified about her future. She decides in favour of a happy home. She prefers the real world, English or Indian, she does not care much. She has resolved to adjust to the new environment. Her English self draws back and dies a slow death. In fact Adit's resolution to return to India comes as a blessing in disguise, as it makes her to solve the crisis that confronts her. Before her departure to India, she pays a visit to her parents in the England countryside but spends an uneasy time there.

The war between India and Pakistan makes Adit nostalgic and awakens in him a desire to be in India. The love of his motherland shakes the latent feelings. He decides to come back to his country immediately. Earlier he was in a dilemma whether to leave England or not. Ultimately he listens to the call of his conscience by which he realizes his social responsibility. He knows no more artificial life of England. He

candidly confesses to Sarah. Sarah dedicates herself to her husband. Though she has to face problems during the long journey from England To India .

Similarly, Dev undergoes a drastic change in his mind. He is an example of dissimilarity. Dev abhors Adit's mind and prepares himself fully to settle down in England for its luxurious life. The novelist proves that the love of motherland is supreme. Finally, he realizes his social responsibilities and returns back home. He gives up all the pomp and show of a materialistic life. He also undergoes a transformation in his character and strikes a comparison and contrast with Adit in existential pursuits. The problems and complications established in the life of emigrants merged as a major theme in the novel of twentieth century authors, crossing the barriers of caste, creed and nationality. The authors are clear enough in narrating the plights of life of immigrants. Desai is one who dives deep in the unconscious and subconscious mind of the emigrants and their nausea, nostalgic and longingness for their native land. Adit weighing the merits and demerits of foreign land. He comes to the conclusion that when his English self is fading and dying to achieve his real self and to have a real life he must go to India, his native place.

Desai feels that all these immigrants are free to live or not live in England. Adit leaves England for good and Dev remains behind once, Adit's fascination for his foreign land, to everything about London, is fascinating and, expresses unreservedly: "I love England. I admire England. I can appreciate her history and poetry as much any Englishmen (160).

Dev feels disgusted to see a couple hugging each other under a lamp-post and remark about the obscenity of these people as a bunch of exhibitionists. Adit is proud of his blind admiration for England. Love, admiration and loyalty have much offer to

England, and in return he feels like enjoying and celebrating. Ironically, in all his assessments, worship, land of liberty, individualism he realizes that England can provide him none of these. Wherever he goes, he becomes a victim of racial discrimination and is constantly regarded as second grade citizen. His irresistible destiny goes on as long as his wishes to stay in England.

Despite his love and admiration for England, he feels himself as an alien and a stranger. His heart is full with nostalgic dreams of his native land. He longs for many things, especially food items in his home. He closes the circle of his migration complete from India to England and again to India but Dev who comes for studies criticizes the Britishers, laughs at Adit about his love for England. In the beginning he is fully determined that he will not stay in England. He appreciates England's green and grisly life. It is the beginning of his predicament.

Dev has hatred towards England because once England has overpowered his motherland and ill-treated his countrymen. He shows hatred toward England and its people. He hates Indians who support the Western culture. Anita Desai describes Dev's patriotic emotions that he imbibed from the history of Indian freedom. He considers Englishmen as his enemy but at the end of the novel he decides to settle in England which shows another end of his state of mind. The psychic changes of the protagonists and their plight in alien countries have been candidly shown here. In *Bye - Bye Blackbird* Adit and Dev share in the major parts of the novel. Both of them are the two poles of the thematic burden of enchantment and disenchantment of England. Adit analyses his fascination for England thus:

I like the pubs, I like the freedom a man has here – economic freedom/social freedom..... and I like the Thames. I like old Ma

Jenkins who cleans my rooms..... And I like weekend at the Seaside.
(20-21).

The dark aspect of Adit's love and the bright aspect of Dev's hatred are not discernable here see here but the aspect of their cheerfulness is easily recognizable.

'Pack up all my care and woe, Here I go singing low 'Bye-Bye
Blackbird. Where somebody cares for me, Sugar is sweet and so is she,
Bye – Bye Blackbird'. (21).

The fourth chapter throws light on identity crisis experienced by the principal characters in the immigrant land.

Chapter Four

Cultural Clash

Dev is a Bengali student. He arrives in England to enter the famous London school of Economics. He wants to get higher education. At the very beginning, he starts to seek the job for him. He analyses his fascination for England in the very beginning of the novel as... "...he is appreciative of the greens and oranges of Cezanne, the trees of Van Gogh and the muscular ballet girls of Degas in their ethereal tutus." Dev arrives in England for higher studies. He stays with Adit and Sarah. Nevertheless, he has high prejudice against English snobbery. After arrival, he starts to seek the job for him. Initially he is frustrated but gets the job of a sales representative in a bookshop. As Vinay Kripal observes, "it is not merely physical journey from one land to another but it involves severing of 'spiritual and symbolic ties with his mother country" (1989).

At the beginning of the novel, Adit Sen and his English wife Sarah live very happily. He settle down at this alien shores. He is the hero of this novel. Who was born in middle class. He comes to England to enjoy the freedom. Here he falls in love with the English girl Sarah and gets married. London is fascinating and captivating for him. He expresses his feeling for this place as... "I love England. I admire England. I can appreciate her history and poetry as much as many Englishmen". Thus, Adit Sen has transformed himself entirely to England. He has fully adopted the lifestyle of Britain.

All the principal characters are not sensitive but introvert. Dev hangs with a sense of uncertainty. His problem starts from the sort of treatment, which Indian immigrants get from the English people. Dev is full of excitement and agitation. He feels divided within. Because English people treat him very badly. He becomes a victim of insult

and abuse at the hands of English people. Indian immigrants are not even allowed to use a lavatory of the English. The London docks have three kinds of lavatories i.e. Ladies, Gents and Asiatic. He wants to return to India because he can never bear to be unwanted. Once a peddler refuses to tell Dev the price of Russian icon because he considers Dev too poor an Indian to purchase it. That peddler thinks that India is known for its poverty. Their typical and narrow-mindedness towards Indian immigrants is very sharp. Even Sumitra Kurketi rightly observes about Dev's situation... "Wherever he goes, he becomes a victim of racial discrimination and apartheid and is constantly regarded as ... a second grade citizen ...an intruder. (Sumitra Kurketi, 2000). Dev hates the label 'Indian Immigrant'. He feels like a stranger in England. Yet Dev is sceptic and realistic about everyone who believes in oriental wisdom. Therefore, he is called a 'wog' by the white boy, Dev sharply reacts and addresses him as 'paji'. In his comment Dev, R.K.Dhawan says... "He also thinks that there is a slow development in his own country and makes use of every opportunity to breathe the Indian mentality as provincial and narrow." (Dhawan, 1993). Dev feels alienated in the beginning but at the end of the novel, he is very happy. In contrast to this, Adit feels nostalgic for India. At the beginning of the novel, Dev is in confusion either to stay or to return his homeland. He reveals his prejudices for the foreign land. Dev thinks that he is losing his real identity.

Adit understands well the line of reconciliation between these two cultures i.e. the eastern and the western. Once upon a time, he has a great fascination for England but the same feeling is now suffocating him. At Christine Longford's wedding the symptoms of his nervous breakdown. It can be seen... "Struck with fear for his health, for his mental balance, he stood frozen on the pavement". A question torments him "Who is he and where is he?" He wants no longer to be seen under label 'Wog'.

'Asiatic', 'Indian Immigrant' etc. He carves an identity for himself and feels alienated. He wants to return to the mother's womb. His nostalgia acquires a dreadful dimension and illness. He is fed up with the life in England. Ultimately he decides to return India with his wife.

Like Dev, Sarah too is in search of identity. She is portrayed as a traditional wife. Her situation is more complex. She cannot decide her real identity. There are numerous adjustments of Sarah in the novel. She hates English People's love of privacy and narrow-mindedness. Sarah's position "represents, in a sense, all immigrant wives who have their own problems of adjustment when placed in the contexts of cultures at loggerheads." (Pathak 1989). She considers herself as a puppet in the hands of Englishman like Adit. Though Sarah is fully devoted to her husband, she readily makes Indian food for her husband. On her husband's demand, though she has problem in puts on Indian attire and ornaments, she wears Sari. She prepares herself for her husband every time. However, her husband only thinks about her that... "She is like a Bengali girl. Bengali women are like that – reserved and quite". Her marriage is successful but she lives a disturbed life by her contact with Adit. She is fed up with this unhappy life. She avoids answering the personal questions from her neighbourhood. She loses the harmony of her life. She cannot join English group in conversation, jokes and laughter. Her rituals and beliefs are very different from those English people. As a result, she remains as an alien in their world. She feels as a mismatch among these English people. Sometimes she feels ashamed of her husband and sometimes she is afraid of being tortured. She is always ready to care for her husband but there is still some lack of liveliness between them. She has to face many taunts from colleagues because she has broken the social code by marrying a brown Asian. She felt uncertain in her own society.

Adit too notices in Sarah "an anguish

loneliness". That is why she tries to keep herself away from English people. She does not know where she belongs. She feels uprooted. In fact, she is caught between two worlds and she belongs to none. She wondered: "Where was Sarah? She wondered if Sarah had any existence at all. (Desai 1971). Thus, about her identity crisis in England, a critic Jasbir Jain says, "She worries and wonders about her identity and two sides of her character, the two roles do not seem to match or meet. Both Mrs. Sen and the Head's secretary were frauds". She is a pathetic figure. She accepts to remain an outsider in her own land. She has chosen her alienation deliberately by marrying a foreigner. She is like a stoic character with gentleness and submissive nature. She represents all immigrants' wives who have their own problems of adjustments. Many critics consider that her problem is rooted in her cross culture marriage and that is why she only suffers the pathos of an alienated girl. She cannot decide her real world. Really, she longs for her real identity.

Thus, both Dev and Sarah are in search of identity. Dev is a stranger in an alien land. Whereas Sarah is an exile in her own native land. Fascination for India is also portrayed by Anita Desai. Adit feels non-belonging to England. The same feeling was felt by Dev in the early part of the novel. Adit has much emotions for his motherland in the later part of the novel. At the end of the novel, he rejects the western culture and society. Adit wants to escape from the unreal and artificial life, which he is leading. The Indo-Pak war is the last stroke to finalize Adit's decision to return his own clan. Therefore, Adit, with his wife Sarah leaves England and goes to India. If talk about Dev, he is an extrovert, Sarah is an introvert. Both Dev and Sarah are caught in the conflict of acceptance and rejection, which leads them into intense suffering.

Dev and Adit are the two major characters who represent two major streams of life. Adit from the beginning of the novel develops an attachment to the western way of life especially to England, but Dev while living in England shows his repulsion towards the ways of European life and particularly of England. The novel opens with the arrival of Dev in England. He comes to England not for staying but for his education. As a matter of fact, he observes the basic distinction of social and educational factors between the East and the West. Adit, who willingly marries an English girl Sarah, develops his inclination towards England. He tries to be judicious to the country he inhabits and to the country where he exists

for his future like a rationalist; he stands for the situational adjustment with his life. Sarah, Adit's wife stands for her reconciliatory approach between the East and the West. She sacrifices her inhibitive leanings just for the sake of her husband. Adit loves England. Dev loves India, but Sarah swings in between her natural inclinations and willing adoption. The news of war makes Adit nostalgic and awakens in him a desire to be in India. There is a wrestling wish in his mind whether to leave England or to stay there. Ultimately he listens to the call of his conscience and decides to leave England. Sarah, like a traditional Indian wife accepts her fate. She leaves her motherland for the sake of her husband and motherhood.

Cultural alienation, as experienced by the three major characters Dev, Adit and Sarah, forms the central theme of the novel. The Indian immigrants keep wavering between the acceptance and rejection of a world they have been educated to admire and love, which they find on actual contact either to be strange or hostile. Some bitter and hard realities keep them disturbed and wavering in their choices. Not only the immigrants, but Sarah too has to face a hard time in England. Dev and Adit suffer a loss of identity in an alien land. Sarah suffers the

same problem in her own native land just because she has married an Indian.

Dev, Adit and Sarah are indeed victims of racial prejudices. They experience feelings of loss of identity and non-belongingness which disturbs their psychic equilibrium. But they do not yield to those feelings. They do not resort to violence of any sort. The plot of the novel grows with the development of new ideas in the minds of the characters. Both Adit and Sarah are placed under testing circumstances and finally both of them unanimously take the decision of leaving London. Adit decides to leave the alien land for good and go back to his native land. Sarah takes the wise decision of accompanying her husband. Dev, who initially experiences psychological trauma because of his experiences in London, is later on enchanted by the golden land and decides to spend the rest of his life there and he bids the black-bird farewell.

The novelist depicts the existential pursuits of both Dev and Adit who reflect two polarized responses to the locale. The verbal encounters between the two shows differences in their views. While Adit's responses are imbued with scientific rationalism, Dev's responses have something very vague about them. The contrast between Dev and Adit is vital to the novel. They are not merely two individuals; they represent two philosophies of life. Adit has learnt to accept his life in London and so he remains free from the dilemmas that keep haunting Dev.

Dev's anticipation of a life of variety remains unsatiated in the new atmosphere where everyone is a stranger and lives in hiding. He finds London to be world where people live 'silently and invisibly' (56).

He is constantly reminded of India. He is nostalgic of an India of familiar faces, sounds and smells. One can observe the fragmented psyche of the immigrant blackbirds who find themselves trapped in an alien land. The agony of being treated

as an outsider accepting but not acceptable becomes an aching sadness for them. They are overcome by loneliness and alienation and this makes them feel sometimes as bewildered aliens and, at other times as outraged outsiders.

The difference between the two cultures leads to alienation in the novel. Born and brought up in India, Dev and Adit suffer from a loss of identity and a crippling sense of gradual social uprooting. Cultural dichotomy is at the back of despair and discontentment that they experience in England. The experiences of Adit and of Dev give a new perspective to the novel. The inner landscape of Adit is Indian while that of Dev is English. The disturbing experiences of the two bring to the surface what is within them. The experiences of Adit make him nostalgic of what was natural to his soul, the experience of India. He sees 'even in the outspread hair about Sarah's shoulders that Indian landscape' (180). Dev too is at first disappointed on his arrival in London but gradually he is overwhelmed by the English scene.

The characteristic traits of an ex-colonial are displayed in Dev's contradictory responses to England. Suddenly he adores England and suddenly he loathes it. He is caught between acceptance and rejection, between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. He is tortured emotionally and intellectually. Dev's suffering emanates from the duality between experience and mental perception. Sometimes he is all in disgust for London, suddenly his mood changes and he is all in admiration for the same. 'He goes through the entire gamut of love-hate relationship that exists between the colonialist and the colonized, before his final reconciliation' (Sharma 40).

Dev's visit to England was goal oriented, but the psychological conflicts arising out of his practical experience in dealing with the people disturb him. His bias is normally social and cultural. It is not based on personal differences. Dev suffers

because he keeps wavering between his choices. England is the golden world, the price of which is too high for him to pay. He wonders whether he should stay or go back. He wonders whether his pleasures outweigh his disappointments or vice versa. A lot of questions arise in his mind about his fruitless stay in London. Gradually he comes to understand that he is there to indulge in adventure. When he is invited to the countryside, Dev accepts it with great reluctance, not knowing what transformation the visit is going to make in his life. Dev discovers the magic of London again in the countryside. His week-long stay there brings him a new sense of adventure, 'an adventure not of discovery but of recognition' (165). The English countryside stirs his inner self, lets him open his soul and fills it with that healing touch that nature alone can give. Dev's anguished soul has something Wordsworthian about it. It leaves him stupefied with joy. As he responds to the scenic beauty of the English countryside, Dev rediscovers the magic that he has lost in London. The transformation that comes to Dev is explained in poetic terms:

Something had happened he remembered it clearly enough – when he sat on the banks of the trout stream in Hampshire....For the first time Dev felt the rapture...that accompanied him back to London, so that he no longer saw it with the eye of a member of a once conquered race, or an apprehensive and short sighted visitor, but of someone before whom vistas of love, success and joy had opened. (229)

Dev learns to cope up with different problems of adjustment and finally decides to continue his stay in England. Adit Sen makes England his home by marrying an English woman Sarah. A degree from a British University does not help him in getting a decent job in India. He therefore returns to England and works as a travel

agent. Adit can accept life as it comes. He wants to lead an average man's life without bothering about the cultural differences, which shocks Dev on his arrival in England. He wants to avoid humiliation and neglect, which he experiences while living in an alien land. To escape from this, he sinks into Sarah's love and tries to cover up his feeling of alienation and loneliness.

Though Adit is basically an Indian, he speaks against India and in favour of England. This is not because he hates India but because he has grown to love the country that gave him a decent job. So inspite of the insults he receives, he does not bother about anything. Adit's visit to his in-laws becomes the turning point of his life. The behaviour meted out to him by Sarah's mother hurts him so much that he starts yearning for his own country. He feels very humiliated and becomes aware of the tragic fact that he will always remain an outsider in England. The lack of belongingness and self-respect make him crave for his own culture and country. There is no scope for him to improve his relationship with his friends and his in-laws who consider themselves superiors. It becomes increasingly difficult to live in a society where a person has no respect. He fails to hold the balance he has been successfully maintaining earlier all because of his frustration, hate and anger.

The inability to acclimatize is in a sense Dev's own problem. He feels alienated in London from both Indians and Englishmen. He found it extremely difficult to adjust himself with the new surroundings. He saw:

Super-markets with their pyramids of frozen food packets, delicateness with their continental fruits and wines and cheeses, the clothes shops with their waxy, surprise-eyed models in windows started with gloves and lace handkerchiefs, the pubs and fish and chips shops the water of high, aristocratic perambulators and hairless, pudding faced, lollipop-

stoppered babies, the well-groomed dogs on leashes, the trim nylons on the women's stout legs, the red umbrellas and blue mackintoshes, the drizzle and the sunshine, the high prices and the easy trade (14).

The novel is not about Dev and Adit as much as it is about Sarah who has withdrawn from the world of her childhood. She is reluctant to visit her former friends, just as she is unwilling to talk about her Indian husband. Her whole existence is split into two different roles – one as an Indian wife and the other as an English lady. The real Sarah is lost between the two worlds. In her present position, she can feel free only amongst strangers where she is unidentifiable. A poignant portrayal of Sarah's predicament reveals that Anita Desai's view is not limited to the socio-cultural dimensions of alienation from the point of view of Indians. Alienation and cultural dissociation can be experienced even when living in one's own country. Sarah's situation as an English girl, married to an Indian, culturally alienates her in her homeland. She loses her identity in her own country. She suffers this anguish silently. The inner dynamics that takes place between the individual and his surroundings is unpredictable and this proves to be true in the transformation of the characters. The novelist suggests a pattern of action where each soul, after initial shock, puzzlement and anguish, discovers its own natural condition. Adit leaves London because of humiliation but he professes his departure to be a result of patriotism towards his motherland. Sarah departs with Adit partly because she wants to see India, which seems to be a magic land to her, but mainly because she wants to escape isolation in her motherland. After reading the novel one wonders how long London would remain a 'magic land' for Dev. The ultimate decision taken by the major characters, though unbelievable at first is quite convincing at last.

The fifth chapter sums up all the chapters and presents the researcher's hope for further research.

Chapter Five

Summation

Anita Desai born in Mussoorie in 1937 is an Indian novelist writing in English and the Emerita John E. Burchard Professor of Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Where She has said about the urge she had to write novels at an early age of seven – “By the age of seven or eight I was certainly writing a great deal and determined to be a writer”. As a writer she has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize three times. She received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*, from the Sahitya Akademi. Anita Desai is a reputed Indo Anglican woman novelist. In her novels the focus is on the inner climate. Her novels deal with the cultural displacement of the protagonists. Her protagonists are acutely aware of their nothingness in the modern set up. They feel that they are not worth anything in society. Their sense of futility is extremely appalling. The urge to write continued to grow stronger. In her childhood days, she wrote for both school magazines and for the College magazines during college days. Writing became a daily exercise. She would go to sleep without writing. Thus, Writing stories and novels was her food and drink.

A writer cannot help revealing himself or herself in his/her works. Those who read her novels, come to know that Anita Desai has intimate knowledge of plants and flowers with their botanical names and variations. As she was born in the hills she has in-born love for hill stations like Darjeeling, Kasauli, and Kalimpong which she has described in her novels and stories. Though she has evinced love of nature, she is in fact a keen observer of human behaviour.

Anita Desai is indisputably one of the most powerful contemporary Indian novelists in English. She represents the welcome "creative release of the feminine sensibility" which began to emerge after the World War II. A novelist of considerable merit, Desai has enriched the tradition the Indian novel in English. Desai's *'Bye Bye Blackbird'* is a fine novel, which presents the theme of alienation and East-West clash. It is a study of human relationships also. This third novel of Desai deals with the travels of Indian immigrants in England. It describes the emotional trauma and disturbances experienced by Indian immigrants in England. *'Bye-Bye Blackbird'* is an authentic study of human relationships between the persons of different cultures like the east and west. It deals with friendship also. The relationships of husband and wife and of father-daughter have also been presented. The novel also deals with many existential problems.

Bye-Bye Blackbird is an authentic study of human relationships subject to a sense of non belonging, displacement and dilemma. Of all the novels by Desai, *Bye-Bye Blackbird* is most intimately related to her own experience. It reconfirms Desai's reputation as a psychologist, when she renders the raging rows of her characters in the situations which they do not want to be in. The novel gives expression to disillusionment at racial prejudice, indifference leading to an anguish of loneliness and search for identity.

Bye-Bye Blackbird is the story of an Indian Immigrant, Adit sen, who works as a small clerk in a tourist agency in London. Married to an English girl Sarah, he has adapted himself to the intermittent current of hatred and contempt that the Britishers nurse for the immigrants. Though he feels a Kinship with England, as he has been acquainted with English Literature, lifestyle as well as manners, yet he experiences the yearnings anxieties and aspirations for a reunion with his own people. This

longing becomes more intense with the arrival of Dev, a young Bengali student who has come to London to seek admission into London School of Economics. Dev unlike a usual immigrant looks at the British way of life contemptuously at the beginning but later he is reluctant to leave, once he gets acclimatized to the British culture. Dev reminds Adit of his complacency and his contemptuous state by his caustic remarks

"Laugh, go on. That's all you people can do you Lazy immigrants. God. You should go mad, when you find that London docks have three kinds of lavatories – Ladies, Gents and Asiatics. But what did you do? You laughed" (p. 19). He expresses his anger candidly -- "I wouldn't live in a country where I was insulted and unwanted" (p. 18).

Adit sen and his English wife Sarah share a relationship which is subject to tension by cultural schism between them. Sarah finds Adit crude and loud and Adit finds her silence unfriendly and her reserve chilling. Unwashed dishes horrify Adit and he is often possessed by a yearning to go home. Sarah hates her Indian husband but struggles to cope with her loneliness. She is ostracized by her people for marrying Adit. Thus, Adit feels stifled by the basic disharmony and returns to his homeland which is the last remedy for him. Ironically, Dev stays behind with a conflict raging in his mind. When Adit decides to leave for India, Sarah too goes with him. Though the central theme varies in Anita Desai's novels, the undercurrent in these novels is one of loneliness and alienation of a human being stranded in the isolated island and human destiny.

In the Introduction, the research has put forth contents about the author Anita Desai, how she is known for the portrayal of the inner life of the characters. It summarizes the author's life in a nutshell. The novel also puts forth the inspiration

behind *Bye - Bye Blackbird*. It sums up the important themes and genres that have led to its success and his hatred for the alienation that has led to the formation of the novel.

The second chapter "Alienation" has dealt with the main theme of the *Bye-Bye Blackbird*. All the three major characters- Dev, Sarah and Adit suffer from alienation. Dev is a young man who comes to London to study economics. He stays there with Adit and Sarah. He is not happy to see the humiliation of Indians at the hands of Britishers. Due to this he begins to suffer from alienation. Adit shows that he loves England too much. In fact this show shows his mental agony. Actually he is suffering from his suppressed love for India. He always remains an alien. Sarah also feels alienated. As she has married an Indian, She is cut off from her English social circle.

Anita Desai has thus delineated in the novels, the problems and plights of alienated individuals caught in the crisis of a changing society. She excels particularly in highlighting the miserable position of highly sensitive and emotional women, tortured by a humiliating sense of neglect, of loneliness and of desperation. The existential problem of the alienated self finally emerges to be the central theme of her novels. She represents therefore "a set of new attitudes and themes" associated with modern Indian novel in English. In the last two novels the problems of the alienated self have been confronted and resolved in a positive way.

The third Chapter "Immigrants" has dealt with how Anita Desai highlights the physical and psychological problems of Indian immigrants, and explores the adjustment difficulties that they face in England. The characters are not so real, but their inner conflicts and crises remain the same that every immigrant undergoes.

Moreover, Anita Desai's mixed parentage has given her the double perspective in the effective handling of the theme of Diasporas in her novels.

Bye - Bye Blackbird depicts the plights of the expatriates in England. In the novel, Anita Desai presents a clear picture of the plight of all the characters who remain in a dilemma as to whether they should leave England or not, but the novelist leaves them free to decide. Adit who loves it leaves for good and decides to settle in India. Dev, who hates it, stays in London. In *Bye - Bye Blackbird* there are different effects on different characters. For Adit, it is an eye-opener, making him return to his country.

The Fourth Chapter "Identity Crisis" it deals with how Dev and Sarah are in search identity. Dev is a stranger in an alien Land. Whereas Sarah is an exile in her own native Land. Fascination for India is also portrayed by Anita Desai. Adit feels non-belonging to England. The same feeling was experienced by Dev in early part of the novel. Adit has much emotion for his motherland in the later part of the novel. At the end of the novel, he rejects the western culture and society. Adit wants to escape from the unreal and artificial life, which he is leading. The Indo-pak war is the last stroke to finalize Adit's decision return to his own clan. Therefore, Adit, with his wife Sarah leaves England and goes to India. If talk about Dev, he is an extrovert, Sarah is an introvert. Both Dev and Sarah are caught in the conflict of acceptance and rejection, which leads them into intense suffering.

In conclusion it can be said that the novel is an authentic statement on the East West clash of cultures, and establishes the pull of the native culture over the adopted one. The characters like Sarah, Adit and Dev face the problems in relation to their culture. Adit finally decides to go back to India. His deeply rooted attachment

not to cut Indian culture grip him and he takes the decision to go back with her. Sarah is also in conflict because she is deeply rooted with her culture and society. But when she realizes the behavior of her colleagues toward her, she is still with situation and decides to go with Adit silently. On the other hand, Dev who is first hated western culture finally decides to stay in England with white people. So we can conclude that the novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* by Anita Desai is a good novel based on east-west culture in which we find the matching and something of two cultures. Through the characters of the novel we analyze the condition of immigrants in England and also find the love and hate for one another's nation. Finally, the novel is the combination of many cultures and with the similar as dissimilar thinking towards East-West World.

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Striving for Power: A Study of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Symbolism	12
Three	Ethical Trauma	23
Four	Shifting of Power	34
Five	Summation	44
	Works Cited	52

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Striving for Power: A Study of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*** a novel submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Rathisha.K. during the year 2019-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Striving for Power: A Study of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

Rathisha K.

April 2021

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Striving for Power: A Study of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*** highlights how the human beings has the tendency to subjugate those who have a quality of "otherness" by dominating, abusing, exploiting and objectifying .

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of J.M. Coetzee, his life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of his work and the novel chosen for the study.

The second chapter **Symbolism** enhances the symbols that Coetzee has dealt with in *Disgrace* to convey insecurity, segregation and racial discrimination in South Africa and also to reveal the life status of characters in different settings.

The third chapter **Ethical Trauma** highlights how the interpersonal moral support can help a person to overcome their trauma and to get through their difficult period.

The fourth chapter **Shifting of Power** focuses on how the male characters in *Disgrace* are getting shift in their power and how the female character are sole reason behind it.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It also emphasize how the male characters in *Disgrace* identify themselves being superior about by subjugating the female character and making them feel inferior.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Literature has supreme value and it plays a major role which leads to the further intellectual development of the world. Literature is valued to build up mankind wiser and better citizens of the world. Literature is defined as a written material such as poetry, novels, short stories, essays etc. especially works of imagination characterized by excellence of styles and expression. Literature is seen as the manipulation of language tool for the purpose of exploring human experiences in diverse situations.

Literature has become a true element for cultural globalization, especially for Africa whose literature has been worthless and denied by Western critics. It is one of the demands that African literature does not aspire to ideological universalism; which they claim to be peculiar reserve of the Western works, to the exclusion of works from other races. African literature usually refers to a comprehensive, complex and creative literature of and from Africa. African literature is mainly classified into three distinctly and widely accepted categories traditional oral literature of Africa, literature written in indigenous African languages and literature written in European languages. Traditional oral literature of Africa may be in the form of prose, verse or proverb. It is generally described as orature. Orature flourished in Africa primarily in absence of widespread literacy and was handed down the generations through memorization and repg no. The contents may differ in length ranging from single sentence formulation such as proverb to epics which has to be performed over a period of time. This verbal art had a useful purpose of providing entertainment as well as instruction. They served as the medium to

explain the creation of universe, the essence of the activities of God and creatures and their intra and inter relationships. Oral folklore was employed to restore faith in group values and discourage anti social tendencies.

The span of African written literature is nearly five thousand years. The antecedents of African written literature can be traced to hieroglyphic writing of ancient Egypt. African literacy works are also available in native African languages like those of Yoruba and Hausa in West Africa; Somali and Swahili in East Africa, Soho and Zulu in Southern Africa. However most of African written literature is in European languages especially English, French and Portuguese. Francophone African literature is not extensive as Anglophonic African literature. This is due to the fact that though Africa was colonized by several European imperial powers, British annexed various parts across the length and breadth of Africa. It is usually referred as modern African literature i.e. dominant African literature.

South African literature in English effectively began in the late 19th century in the states preceding the Republic of South Africa and became fairly abundant in the 20th. During the early 1900s, Africans began to write in English. In the middle decades many Africans served literary apprenticeships on popular English newspapers and periodicals, such as *Drum*, which was aimed at the native African reader. At that time English-speaking writers, both black and white, began to mix on a limited scale. But it was only short-lived; from 1948, many African and white writers went into exile for political reasons.

Olive Schreiner, a liberal and a powerful writer on local and international affairs, composed the first great South African novel, *The Story of an African Farm* (1883). Other English writers include William Plomer, who pioneered 'race relations' as material for fiction in the novel *Turbott Wolfe* (1925), and Pauline Smith, whose stories in *The Little Karoo* (1925) dealt sympathetically with rural Afrikaners. Laurens van der Post, in his novel *In a Province* (1934), dealt with the African-coming-to-town theme.

Alan Paton and Nadine Gordimer both achieved international reputations with their novels and short stories. *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948) established Paton as the most eloquent voice of South African liberal humanism, and his later writing, such as the novel *Too Late the Phalarope* (1953) and the stories in *Debbie Go Home* (1961), made him even more famous. Paton's work is characterized by rhythmic prose, a compassionate view of South Africa, and irony. Gordimer, a meticulous observer of the physical world and of nuances in human relationships made an impact abroad with her first novel, *The Lying Days* (1953). In 1991, Gordimer became the first South African to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Perhaps the most important novelist to emerge after Gordimer was 2003 Nobel Prize winner John Maxwell Coetzee, whose books mark a decisive break with South African traditions of realism and naturalistic description. He is the most internationally acclaimed writer South Africa has produced, and a unique and fascinating voice. He is highly experimental in his approach when it comes to tackling politically charged issues such as race and class in economic and hard hitting prose.

Coetzee was born in Cape Town, Cape Province, Union of South Africa, on 9 February 1940 to Afrikaner parents. The family mainly spoke English at home, but John spoke Afrikaans with other relatives. He is descended from 17th-century Dutch immigrants to South Africa on his father's side and from Dutch, German and Polish immigrants through his mother's. Coetzee spent most of his early life in Cape Town and in Worcester, a town in the Cape Province, as recounted in his fictionalised memoir, *Boyhood* (1997). At the University of Cape Town he received his Bachelor of Arts with Honours in English in 1960 and received his Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Mathematics in 1961.

Coetzee moved to the United Kingdom in 1962. The University of Cape Town awarded him a Master of Arts degree for his thesis "The Works of Ford Madox Ford with Particular Reference to the Novels" (1963). Coetzee's experiences in England were later recounted in *Youth* (2002), his second volume of fictionalised memoirs. In 1968, Coetzee began teaching English literature at the State University of New York at Buffalo, where he stayed until 1971 and began his first novel, *Dusklands*.

In 1972 Coetzee returned to South Africa and was appointed lecturer in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Cape Town. Then he was promoted to senior lecturer and associate professor before becoming Professor of General Literature. After relocating to Adelaide, Australia, Coetzee was made an honorary research fellow at the English Department of the University of Adelaide where his partner, Dorothy Driver was a fellow academic. As of May 2019, Coetzee is listed as Professor of Literature within English and Creative Writing at the school.

Dusklands (1974), Coetzee's first book, contains two novellas united in their exploration of colonization, *The Vietnam Project* (set in the United States in the late 20th century) and *The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee* (set in 18th-century South Africa). *In the Heart of the Country* (1977) also published as *From the Heart of the Country* filmed as *Dust*, (1986) is a stream of consciousness narrative of a Boer madwoman. His work often inhabits an unusual disjointed terrain, in which the traumas of the country and characters are exaggerated and symbolic and the effect of a broken society reflects itself in the characters' own psychological ruptures. This is taken to extreme in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, an examination of the ramifications of colonization, which goes beyond allegory to imagine an apolitical, non specific and timeless conceptual space in which Coetzee is able to explore issues of ownership, violence and the idea of a civilization free from his own country's problems. *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), which won the Booker Prize, deals with the dilemma of a simple man beset by conditions which he can neither comprehend nor control during a civil war in a future South Africa. In such novels as *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), and *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983), Coetzee uses allegory, black humour, and stream of consciousness narrative techniques to depict the brutality and injustice of unnamed but clearly exploitative modern societies.

Coetzee continued to explore themes of the colonizer and the colonized in *Foe* (1986), his reworking of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Coetzee's female narrator comes to new conclusions about power and otherness and ultimately concludes that language can enslave as effectively as can chains. In *Age of Iron* (1990) Coetzee dealt directly with circumstances in contemporary South Africa, but in *The Master of*

Petersburg (1994) he made reference to 19th-century Russia (particularly to Fyodor Dostoyevsky's work *The Devils*). Both books treat the subject of literature in society. In 1999, with his novel *Disgrace*, Coetzee became the first writer to win the Booker Prize twice. After the novel's publication and an outcry in South Africa, he moved to Australia, where he was granted citizenship in 2006.

The structure of Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), is a series of 'lessons' in which the eponymous narrator reflects on a variety of topics, puzzled many readers. One reviewer proposed that it be considered 'non-fiction.' Costello makes reappearance in Coetzee's *Slow Man* (2005), about an amputee's reluctance to accept his condition. *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) employs a literally split narrative technique and the main story is the musings of an aging South African writer modeled on Coetzee himself. In *The Childhood of Jesus* (2013), a boy and his guardian clean a dystopian world, from which desire and pleasure have apparently been wiped out, in search of the boy's mother. The first in a trilogy, it was followed by *The Schooldays of Jesus* (2016) and *The Death of Jesus* (2020).

The notably reticent author's nonfiction books included *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (1988); *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews* (1992); *Giving Offense: Essays on Censorship* (1996); and the autobiographic trilogy *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life* (1997), *Youth: Scenes from Provincial Life II* (2002), and *Summertime* (2009). *Here and Now: Letters 2008–2011* (2013) is a collection of correspondence between Coetzee and American novelist Paul Auster. *The Good Story: Exchanges on Truth, Fiction, and Psychotherapy* (co written with Arabella Kurtz) was published in 2015.

Coetzee has received numerous awards throughout his career. Coetzee was the first writer to be awarded the Booker Prize twice: for *Life & Times of Michael K* in 1983, and for *Disgrace* in 1999. *Summertime* was an early favourite to win Coetzee third Booker Prize but lost to bookmakers' favourite *Wolf Hall*, by Mantel. In 2 October 2003, Horace Engdahl, head of the Swedish Academy, announced that Coetzee had been chosen as that year's recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature, making him the fourth African writer to be so honoured and the second South African, after Nadine Gordimer. When awarding the prize, the Swedish Academy stated that Coetzee is incomparable when it comes to portraying surprising involvement of the outsider. The press release for the award also cited his well-crafted composition, pregnant dialogue and analytical brilliance, while focusing on the moral nature of his work.

On 27 September 2005 the South African government awarded Coetzee the Order of Mapungubwe (gold class) for his contribution in the field of literature and for putting South Africa on the world stage. In 2013, Richard Poplak of the *Daily Maverick* described Coetzee as the most celebrated and decorated living English-language author .

Coetzee is notable as a great South African writer who grappled with the savage complexity of the apartheid and post-apartheid years. Coetzee also took the novel in English into new imaginative and moral territory. From his many outstanding works of fiction, *Disgrace* is unquestionably his masterpiece which was a Booker prize winner in 1999, making JM Coetzee the first writer to win the trophy twice (first with *Life & Times of Michael K*).

Disgrace begins in Cape Town, South Africa with narrator telling that by this point in his life, 52-year-old Professor David Lurie has “solved the problem of sex rather well” (1). He was once a Professor of classics and modern languages at Cape Town Technical University. Though he prefers to teach literature, he still starts teaching communication skills courses because of the changing needs of the students and the university. However, he’s still allowed to conduct one course of his own choosing, so he leads a class on Romantic poetry, though this does not give him any satisfaction. He is alienated from social relations by two divorces and his recent estrangement from his child, Lucy, who lives on the Eastern Cape. This social alienation has led him to satisfy his sexual urges with a prostitute named Soraya, until he destroys the arrangement by attempting to contact her outside their normal meetings.

His ‘disgrace’ comes when he seduces one of his more vulnerable students in his Romantic poetry class, a twenty year old girl named Melanie Isaacs, utilizing her with alcohol and other actions that amount to rape and when she stops attending his class as a result, he falsifies her grades. Lurie refuses to stop the affair, even after being threatened by Melanie’s boyfriend Ryan, and her father, who confronts him but whom David runs from. This affair is then got revealed to the school. Melanie withdraws from all her classes and a sexual harassment case is filed against Professor Lurie. The investigation unfolds like a criminal trial with the judges being his colleagues on the committee. He is given ample opportunity to express guilt, enter counseling, and save his job, but he strongly refuses. So eventually he was given no grace and finally forced to resign from his university.

Lurie leaves Cape Town and goes to the rural town of Salem in Eastern Cape to take refuge on his lesbian daughter Lucy, who lives on a farm. Lucy makes a living kenneling dogs and selling the crops at the farmers market. She is as practical, down to earth, and responsible as David is not. For the past several years, Lucy has been farming with her partner, Helen, but Helen has recently left, so she's taking care of everything on her own except for a man named Petrus, a polygamously married black African whose farm borders Lucy's and who works for Lucy as a 'dog-man' (Lucy boards dogs). A government grant has enabled Petrus to purchase part of Lucy's land and so he begins building a house of his own. Lurie begins a new life there, helping Lucy at the market and meeting her friends Bev and Bill Shaw and also helping Petrus to take care of the dogs, and volunteers at the Animal Welfare League, where Bev Shaw treats injured animals and euthanizes those who are beyond treatment. He also spends time working on an opera based on the love affair between the British poet Lord Byron and his mistress Teresa Guiccioli. Lucy doesn't press him for further details, though she has heard only little detail about his troubles in Cape Town instead she tells him that he can stay as long as he'd like and urge him to see her hospitality as 'refuge'.

After becoming comfortable with rural life, he is forced to come to terms with an attack on the farm. Three strangers, two men and a boy, who claim to need Lucy's phone to call to help one of their sick relative, force their way into the farmhouse and have locked Lucy and themselves in the house. In a total panic, David lets go of the bulldog's leash and commands the dog to go after the boy. When he finally gets into the kitchen he is knocked unconscious by a blow in the head and got dragged into the bathroom, and locked in there. No matter how hard he tries, he can't break down the door, so he calls

Lucy's name and feels helpless. Lucy is taken into a back room and raped by the three men. Before they leave the house, the robbers shoot the dogs in the kennel which Lucy is boarding, an action which David later muses was done since black people in South Africa are taught to fear dogs as symbols of white power and oppression, ransack the house, set Lurie on fire, and steal his car. Lucy reports to the police officer but she doesn't want to pursue the crime as a rape though Lurie presses her to do so and she is just willing to report it as a robbery and assault. The relationship between Lucy and David begins to show strain. Lucy goes through a period of depression after the attack. Whenever Lurie tries to talk to his daughter about the incident she either avoids his questions or gives him a sharp reply. Lurie is enraged because the culprits have not been caught and Lucy fears that they may come back. Lurie suspects Petrus since he was nowhere to be seen during the attack and believes that he intentionally left the house unprotected so that it could be robbed. This suspicion is strengthened when one of the attackers, a young man named Pollux, attends one of Petrus's parties which he had to celebrate his new ownership of part of Lucy's land. Lurie immediately wants to call the police and have him arrested, but Lucy refuses and returns home.

As the relationship between Lucy and David deteriorates, David decides to leave his daughter and return to Cape Town. On his way back to Cape Town, David goes to visit Melanie's father Isaacs to explain his side of the story. Isaacs invites him over for dinner with the whole family where he meets Melanie's sister who rekindles David's internal passion and lust. Finally when David attempts to apologize, Isaac tells him that he must consider what God wants him to do and follow his own path to redemption. When Lurie returns to his house in Cape Town, he finds it has been robbed. He returns to

his office and finds his replacement at his desk. For a while, Lurie tries to get his opera on Byron off the ground but comes to an impasse. He decides to return to Lucy's house because Bev hints over the phone that something has happened. She reveals she is pregnant from the rape and ignores David's advice to terminate the pregnancy. . He learns that the boy who raped Lucy, Pollux, is part of Petrus's family. When David confronts Petrus, Petrus says he will marry Lucy to protect her, since Pollux is too young to do so. While acknowledging that Petrus is after her land Lucy decides to sign over her land to Petrus in exchange for protection and the right to remain in her house. David attacks Pollux when he finds him spying on Lucy. Lucy makes it clear that David's outbursts have destroyed her peace and indicates that she wants him to move out. Knowing he has only made things worse for his daughter Lurie starts working at the animal shelter with Bev Shaw and waiting for Lucy to give birth. As the novel comes to an end David becomes particularly attached to one crippled dog. The novel closes with David bringing the dog in to be euthanized.

Thus Coetzee has very brilliantly incorporated many themes within this novel *Disgrace* but the most important one is how the people in South Africa are dealing with change in the racial hierarchy now that the apartheid is over. Coetzee also explores the issue of sexuality, violence and the inhumane treatment of animals at the hands of the human beings which will be discussed

CHAPTER TWO

SYMBOLISM

Kedari states that “Coetzee has used numerous symbols in *Disgrace* to convey insecurity, segregation and racial discrimination in South Africa” (1). He has mainly used animals to symbolize the human tendency to subjugate those who have a quality of ‘otherness’ by dominating, abusing, exploiting and objectifying and also the aftermath of apartheid in South Africa. Throughout the novel, David’s interactions with animals reflect both his self-awareness and his state of grace. He initially considers animals as ‘other’ and he feels humans are so different from animals.

As for animals, by all means let us be kind to them. But let us not lose perspective. We are of a different order of creation from the animals. Not higher, necessarily, just different. So if we are going to be kind, let it be out of simple generosity, not because we feel guilty or fear retribution. (74)

The author has mainly utilized dogs to symbolize life status of characters in different setting and low life since dogs normally live lower lives than people do. Coetzee also points out that people who live like dogs are in the lowest levels of life where there is no right, dignity or chance of getting property. For example, dogs are mentioned mainly in Salem where there is poor lifestyle and it’s mainly a black occupied setting where Lucy and David toil to earn a living. Lucy, for example, once says,

This is the only life there is. Which we share with animals. That’s the example that people like Bev try to set. That’s the example I try to follow. To share some of our human privilege with the beasts. I don’t want to come back in another existence as a dog or a pig and have to live as dogs or pigs live under us. (74)

Moreover, Lucy's dogs are killed shamefully without protection or dignity, which is reminiscent of the low and insecure life at Salem. For the non-white Africans, the dogs were symbols of white oppression of violence. That is the part of the reason why Lucy's attackers killed almost all of her dogs in the kennel. Moreover, Lucy and Daniel are raped and robbed respectively in Salem.

Additionally when Petrus is introduced in the novel he introduces himself to David as a "dog-man" since he occupies the role of assistant to Lucy. However, during his party, Petrus jokes that he is no longer a dog-man "No more dogs. I am not any more the dog-man" (129). This statement shows about his growing social status and also that he's no longer on level with the dogs. Thus it becomes clear that Coetzee has used the image of dogs to symbolize low life.

Moreover they all become characters in the novel. Some of the dogs that Lucy cares for in her kennel, like Katy the bulldog, have names and recognizable personalities. It becomes clear that they're not just used as dogs and Coetzee has deliberately repeated the image of dogs to emphasize the novel's interests in social status and personal disgrace.

David is disgraced from being a university lecturer to caring for dogs which symbolizes his move from a modern to a traditional lifestyle. As the novel continues, a dog is utilized to symbolize poverty or life without dignity, rights, chance, property or weapons. David's personal problems are also compared to the dog life and they more often reflect his personal, internal trials and tribulations. As things get worse for him and he goes deeper and deeper into shame and disgrace, his character becomes more closely related to dog. When he walks to Lucy about his humiliation at the University after his affair with Melanie, he compares himself to a dog that is beaten for following its sexual instincts. "a dog that has been beaten for following its sexual instincts" (181).

As the novel comes to an end, the connection between dogs and people experiencing disgrace is made clearer, which could be seen in the exchange between Lucy and David while they discuss the humiliation of how things have turned out:

I agree it is humiliating. But perhaps that is a good point to start from again.
Perhaps that is what I must learn to accept. To start at ground level. With nothing.
Not with nothing but. With nothing. No cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity. Like a dog. Yes, like a dog. (205)

Here Lucy is comparing the dogs with being a powerless creature, without pride or title. And what she meant is that to be a dog, is to be the low of the low. Both David and Lucy agree that dog life is painful, lifeless, and without dignity and also that the dog life offers no cards, rights, weapons or property. Here the dog is utilized to symbolize poverty or life without dignity, rights, chance, property or weapons and it shows that to be a dog in this world is to be a base, low, helpless creature without rights or pride. Not long after this exchange, David becomes attached to Katy the bulldog, who is abandoned at Lucy's kennel.

He goes out into the yard. The younger dogs are delighted to see him: they
trot back and forth in their cages, whining eagerly. But the old bulldog bitch barely
stirs. He enters the cage, closes the door behind him. She raises her head, regards
him, lets her head fall again; her old dugs hang slack. He squats down, tickles her behind
the ears. 'Abandoned, are we?' he murmurs. He stretches out beside her on the
bare concrete. Above is the pale blue sky. His limbs relax. (78)

These lines explain David displaying his first gesture of affection toward an animal. He speaks to the dog of her abandonment, something David could easily relate it to. He has been abandoned by women, who no longer find him attractive, by the university where he made his

career and also by the changes in his culture. Inside Katy's kennel, David is calm enough to sleep on the ground next to the dog which symbolizes a shift in David's character and also it shows that David is beginning to humble himself and open his mind to new ways of thinking. The gap between himself who thought him to be an intellectual scholar and disciple of Wordsworth, and the animal 'other', which he thought lacked a soul and intelligence, is getting very close, which Coetzee explains as,

That is where he enters their lives. He may not be their savior, the one for whom they are not too many, but he is prepared to take care of them once they are unable, utterly unable to take care of themselves, once even Bev Shaw has washed her hands of them. A dog-man, Petrus once called himself. Well, now he has become a dog-man: a dog-undertaker; a dog psychopomp. (146)

The final scene shows David carrying the dog that he had bonded with into the euthanasia room. The way David is trying to give him a loving, painless death, it could be seen that he is valuing the dog's dignity, even his soul, over his own desires. "Are you giving him up?" "Yes, I am giving him up" (220). He is "giving him up" out of empathy. This sense of empathy makes him give the same consideration to all other dogs at the clinic. "He has learned by now, from her, to concentrate all his attention on the animal they are killing, giving, is what he no longer has difficulty in calling by its proper name: Love" (219).

David trying to save the dog from a life that is more disgraceful than death symbolize that he is trying to relieve his own sense of disgrace. Thus Coetzee has made a persistent presence of dogs in *Disgrace* to consider the shame and disgrace that humans go through, even the animals.

Coetzee has also used the image of sheep to show even how a man like David has changed and even started sympathising with other living beings. At Petrus's place, David is bothered by the bleats of two young sheep that Petrus has tied up on barren ground. The sheep will be slaughtered and served to guests at the party which Petrus gives to celebrate his new status as a landowner. David's irritation at the noise changes to concern for their well being. He even considers purchasing them to save their lives. In his concern for them, David moves toward the sheep, and they react with obvious unease. This prompts David to wonder if he must change. He asks himself if he has to "become like Bev Shaw," (126) with her ability to connect with and comfort animals.

A bond seems to have come into existence between himself and the two Persians, he does not know how. The bond is not one of affection. It is not even a bond with these in particular, whom he could not pick out from mob in a field. Nevertheless, suddenly and without reason, their lot has become important to him. (126)

Coetzee has also mainly used the romantic poet, Lord Byron as a symbol about whom David is seen working on from even from the beginning of *Disgrace*. George Gordon, Lord Byron was one of the most important poets of Romantic Era. Because of his charisma, he is still one of the most widely studied Romantic poets today and occupies a large place in the thought pattern of Romanticism. He was also one of the most controversial and followed celebrities of his day and he was known for his flashy, flamboyant appearance and his numerous, highly-public love affairs. Byron lived out his own life only for himself without any regards for others. He was, as most Romantics were, self-absorbed. He believed himself to be a lover of women and also that he was adored by them. Also he loved to make women fall for him, for which he was admired so much. Byron had an illegitimate daughter, Allegra, and also there was a rumor that

he was bisexual. Byron eventually left England to escape the social stigma surrounding his sex life, and he died young in Greece at the age of 36.

David definitely has his own knowledge about Byron. He is a scholar of the Romantic poets. Byron is the subject of his newest project. Byron has always been a source of interest for David. Also David wants to be like him and idealize himself as a smooth talker and courteous lover of the ladies. In many ways, David fits into character type called the Byronic Hero, which is also based upon Byron himself. Byronic Heroes aren't perfect. They are stylish but arrogant, well-educated but highly self-critical, charismatic and seductive but self-destructive and suffering from something happened in the past. Coetzee makes reference to Byron who is not just a figure but both Byron and the figure of the Byronic Hero become symbols of David's own character.

Throughout *Disgrace*, David thinks from time to time about writing an opera about the Romantic poet Lord Byron and his lover Teresa. Because he has high hopes for this project despite not having really started it, the opera itself gradually becomes a symbol of David's ability to delude him, since for the majority of the novel he manages to convince himself that this work of art will be outstanding when, in reality, it's clearly meant to fail. After the devastating attack on Lucy's farm, David admits to himself that the idea is not as good as he originally thought. "There is something misconceived about it, something that does not come from the heart" (181), Coetzee writes, explaining that David eventually decides to shift the opera's focus so that it centers not on Byron, but on Teresa.

In fact, David decides to start the play long after Byron has died. This willingness to rethink the project signals David's newfound sense of self-awareness, as he perhaps realizes that his original desire to write about Byron's love life was nothing more than an arrogant wish to

write about his own romantic affairs. In this way, the changing opera signifies David's shifting perception of himself and his slow recognition of his pride. The fact that nothing ever comes of the opera which David soon accepts is nothing more than "the kind of work a sleepwalker might write" (214) parallels David's progression through life, since he finally understands that neither he nor his opera are destined for greatness.

Byron could also be seen as a metaphor for the changing social reality. If Byron carried on like he did in the modern setting he would not be praised, but rather hated and hit with sexual abuse charge because the women's rights and sense of identity has become much more refined and understood than during Byron's time. Thus it's clear that Byron reflects the changing social dynamic, something that David might resemble in his relationship with a changing South Africa. Like women in Byron's case, Africans are no longer subservient, but rather active voices in carving out their own destiny. The manner in which David deals with this change could be seen as reminiscent as how Byron might have addressed the change with women.

Throughout *Disgrace*, David is either thinking about, talking about, or actually working on an opera *Byron in Italy* about the love affair between the Romantic poet Lord Byron and Teresa Guiccioli. Teresa was a younger, married woman whom Byron privately judged as lacking in intelligence and whose life apart from Byron was unremarkable. Teresa shows up in *Disgrace* as Coetzee's one of many historical and literary references, which sounds so reasonable because she was the mistress of one of the poets that David both researches and teaches about in his course. When David begins his opera on Byron, it becomes clear that Teresa has her own part to play since she has essentially become a character in the novel and comes not just as a mere historical reference. David makes use of the character Teresa just to explore the themes of love and sex in his opera. But then Coetzee makes Teresa a lens through

which David's changing attitudes toward love and sex could be seen clearly. The opera that David hopes to write about the affair between Byron and Teresa symbolizes David. He formed this plan of writing an opera while he believed himself to be a man who can make any woman fall in his trap.

That is how he had conceived it: as a chamber- play about love and death, with a passionate young woman and a once passionate but now less than passionate older man; as an action with a complex, restless music behind it, sung in an English that tugs continually toward an imagined Italian. (180)

This is what the narrator has to say about the initial plans for the opera. His changing conception of the project tells about his feelings, desires, and circumstances throughout the plot. When he was involved in an affair with Melanie Isaacs he was only having erotic feelings towards her. During that time, he has not yet started working on the piece. However David want to make his opera to focus on the sensuality and erotic longing between Byron and Teresa as they conduct their affair secretly in the house of Teresa's husband during the Italian summer.

After the devastating attack in Lucy's farm in which his daughter was abused and he got burned, David was so shocked and becomes like a man who has no taste for his life. All he can see before him is a period before death where he lives like a ghost, without any hope and ambition. He admits to himself that the idea isn't as good as he originally thought. "There is something misconceived about it, something that does not come from the heart" (181). As time goes on he starts changing his mind about the way he wants the opera to look. Rather than making his opera about the actual affair between Byron and Teresa, he decides to shift the focus from Teresa's point of view. He tries another track. Abandoning the pages of notes he has

written, he tries to pick Teresa up in middle age. Byron in the new version, is long dead. So it will center on Teresa who tries to resurrect Byron's ghost by singing to him of their love long after Byron has died. In this state David resembles like Byron - flat, ghostly. Also how Teresa becomes aging is also clearly seen:

The new Teresa is a dumpy little widow. She wants to be loved, Teresa to be loved immortally. Teresa has no one to suck the venom from her. Come to me, mio Byron, she cries: come to me, love me! And Byron, exiled from life, pale as a ghost, echoes her derisively: Leave me, leave me, leave me be!(185)

If David resembles Byron, then aging Teresa resembles Bev Shaw who represents David's own romantic interests. Though their relationship doesn't seem to be truly romantic it still shows that he is maturing a little bit. David assigning himself the task of loving this new older Teresa in his opera shows his transition from loving the younger, beautiful ladies to seeking out older, wiser, and down to earth women. This willingness to bring a change in his opera shows his newfound sense of self-awareness and also his shifting perception of himself and his slow recognition of his own pride.

After apologizing to Melanie's family for his actions, David could find himself being graceful. He has an uplifting experience while composing the music for his opera. He could see himself becoming like banjo that revolves around Teresa's mournful wailing for Byron to return to her. This version of Teresa is a symbol for the way David lives his life. He has attempted constantly without any success to pursue a romantic ideal that may or may not have existed. Thus this shows that the opera is nothing more than the sustained mourning of Teresa for a Byron who does not exist and so will never answer or will be able to answer her call.

At last David realizes that his original desire to write about Byron's love life was just an overconfident wish to write about his own romantic affairs and accepts that it is nothing more than "the kind of work a sleepwalker might write".

The lyric impulse in him may not be dead, but after decades of starvation it can crawl forth from its cave only pinched, stunted, deformed. He has not the musical resources, the resources of energy, to raise Byron in Italy off the monotonous track on which it has been running since the start. It has become the kind of work of a sleepwalker might write. (214)

The fact is that nothing ever comes out of the opera even till the end. The end of the novel parallels David's progression through life, since he finally understands that neither he nor his opera are destined for greatness. Therefore it's clear how Coetzee has employed numerous literary devices in his book *Disgrace* mainly symbolism to signify a range of issues from differing settings to racial discrimination.

CHAPTER THREE

ETHICAL TRAUMA

In the first half of *Disgrace*, Lurie is found to be totally self-absorbed in his dealings with others. In fact, he reduces women into objects to satisfy his desire. His sexual harassment of Melanie is an example of how he can victimize others. He even defends his sexual harassment as a right of desire. He believes that he is free to fulfill any desire even by violating the rights of others. But in the second half of *Disgrace*, particularly after Lucy's rape, Lurie becomes ethical who takes care of other human beings and animals. He gets transformed from a self-centered man to a man for others. After his daughter's rape, Lurie learns to live for others. He learns to give thoughts to those who are more helpless than him, such as, his daughter, Lucy, women, and the unwanted animals in the novel. Lurie's care for his daughter, and the injured dog, at the end of the novel, shows his ethical relation with others. About Lurie's ethical responses to others, Michael Marais points out that "the notions of sensibility, sympathy, and compassion, which the novel repeatedly invokes, were self-consciously developed as an ethical response to the instrumentalist logic of self-directed personality" (75). Lurie, who knows only what it is like to be a rapist at the first half of the novel, started knowing what it is like to be a rape victim at the second part of the novel.

Coetzee is himself, an ethical writer, in a sense that he performs the traumas of both his white and black character in *Disgrace*. For instance, he shows the trauma of Melanie, a black character of the novel due to the sexual harassment of Lurie, a white character and also the trauma of David and Lucy, the white characters of the novel, due to the gang-rape of Lucy by three colored men. Thus, both white and black characters of Coetzee become the victim of trauma in this novel. Coetzee seems to say that whoever the perpetrator is, the trauma of the

victim is the same. Moreover, Coetzee's white and black characters share and care one another in their sufferings which make them ethical. Coetzee thus forms a community of sufferers who take care of others in *Disgrace*.

David's ethical response to other women is revealed at the moment when he gives credit to other women for making him better person: "Every woman I have been close to has taught me something about myself. To that extent they have made me a better person" (70). He remembers those women whom he had met in his past, and he wishes their images to continue. He sympathizes with them in his vision:

In a sudden and soundless eruption, as if he has fallen into a waking dream, a stream of images pours down, images of women he has known on two continents, some from so far away in time that he barely recognizes them. . . . What has happened to them, all those women, all those lives? Are there moments when they too, or some of them, are plunged without warning into the ocean of memory? (192)

Thus the above lines shows that David realizes that he is enriched by the women like Melanie, Rosalind, Bev Shaw, Soraya, and the girl in Touws River, for whom his heart floods with thankfulness like a flower blooming in his heart. Besides, David, on Lucy's request, decides to go to the animal clinic and help Bev Shaw, which indicates his transformation from a self-absorbed man to an ethical one. In the past, he did not like animals: "though in fact he is repelled by the odours of cat urine and dog minge and Jeyes Fluid that greet them" (72). He even did not like to enter the animal clinic owing to the bad smell that animals produce. But now, he loves animals. He says "As for animals, by all means let us be kind to them" (74). Accordingly, he begins to spend his afternoons in animal surgery helping Bev Shaw, and also he helps Lucy for feeding her dogs. He watches the dogs while they are eating. He loves being with them, "He

squats, allows the dog to smell his face, his breath” (85). The traumatic event of Lucy’s rape brings changes in the worldly desires of Lurie. As DeKoven mentions, This change in him requires Lurie to understand the parallels between himself and Lucy’s rapists as well as the link between himself and other animals, particularly dogs. It also requires him to add to that linkage deerotized middle-aged woman. (863)

Similarly, Laura Wright rightly points out that “after his daughter’s rape, David embarks upon the perhaps impossible quest to embody the other in the form of black South Africans, women, and animals” (85). These critics are true regarding Lurie’s ethical behavior as he starts serving other women and dogs in the novel. Moreover, he begins to understand others’ sufferings after being the victim of traumatic event of assault and his daughter’s gang-rape. He manages the farm, the garden, and the kennels after Lucy’s rape. He starts thinking about his future, Lucy’s future and the future of the land as a whole. He becomes, as Derek Attridge observes, “a loving and attentive father” (104) of Lucy.

Even while staying at Cape Town for some days, David is too much worried about Lucy, and gives her a call: ““I thought I’d phone in case you were worried about me,’ he says. ‘I’m fine. I’ll take a while to settle down’” (178). He further asks her whether Petrus is looking after her or not. Also, he decides to stand by his daughter even though he knows that Lucy is pregnant and going to give birth to the child of the rapists in spite of his disapproval. Thus, David really lives for others and he is no more an irresponsible man in the novel.

In the past, David never took care of his daughter and his wives whom he used for sexual pleasure and got divorced later on which proves that he is a self-centered. But now he got changed and starts living for others. Although he has suffered along with his daughter, he takes

care of her by nursing her when she has suffered from the traumatic event of rape. At the end of the novel, although David lives separately, he pays much attention to Lucy.

David is sympathetic to animals too as it is clear from the love he shows to the young sheep that Petrus, Lucy's neighbor, a colored man, has brought to be slaughtered in the party that he is going to host. The pathetic condition of the sheep upsets Lurie who, then, goes up to Petrus and asks him, "'Those sheep,' he says 'don't you think we could tie them where they can graze?'" (123). But, Petrus is busy with his own work and does not care what David tells him. David, a self-absorbed man in the past, now starts thinking about the painful life of animals. David reflects on the lives of the sheep thus:

An hour later the sheep are still tethered, still bleating dolefully. They are black-faced Persians, alike in size, in markings, even in their movements. Twins, in all likelihood, destined since birth for the butcher's knife. Well, nothing remarkable in that. When did a sheep last die of old age? Sheep do not own themselves, do not own their lives. They exist to be used, every last ounce of them, their flesh to be eaten, their bones to be crushed and fed to poultry. Nothing escapes, except perhaps the gall bladder, which no one will eat. Descartes should have thought of that. The soul, suspended in the dark, bitter gall, hiding. (123)

Thus, the pitiable life of animal disheartens David. He extends his ethical duty or responsibility not only to his daughter, Lucy, and Bev Shaw, a black woman, but also to animals around him. He is very sad to know that Petrus is going to kill those sheep and that they would not live long.

Lurie does not like the way Petrus is going to slaughter the sheep at his party. He expresses his sorrow about the sheep with Lucy: "'I'm not sure I like the way he does things

bringing the slaughter-beasts home to acquaint them with the people who are going to eat them” (124). Some bond of love could be seen between David and these sheep. He even does not know how this bond of love develops. He remembers Bev Shaw caring the old goat, stroking and comforting it and wonders how she gets this empathy with animals. He thinks that someone must have some trick for it, and has to be changed to get that trick: “Do I have to change, he thinks? Do I have to become like Bev Shaw?” (126). Though Lurie hesitates to bring a change in him, he has already shown the symptoms of change in his behavior by treating the animals lovingly. Michalinos Zembylas has a similar opinion regarding Lurie’s ethical responsibility for others. He rightly observes that. . . after the rape of Lucy, Lurie claims that he is too old to change, repeating this claim on a number of occasions; yet, he does change in the course of the novel, a change that involves learning to become responsible towards the Other. (226)

As David loves the sheep brought by Petrus to cut off at his party, he decides not to go to the party even if he and Lucy have been invited, so that he would not have to see the flesh of the sheep in his food. He speaks to Lucy, ““I have been thinking about this party of Petrus’s. On the whole, I would prefer not to go”” (126). In his heart, he finds only sadness that comes from the memory of those unfortunate sheep. His love over animals is clearly reflected when he takes Katy, Lucy’s old dog, for a walk: He has been out, taking the bulldog Katy for a walk. Surprisingly, Katy has kept up with him, either because he is slower than before or because she is faster. She snuffles and pants as much as ever, but this no longer seems to irritate him. (206)

In the past, dogs used to irritate him, but now he enjoys with them, which indicates a change in his nature, from a self-absorbed man to a responsible man for the Other. Lurie goes off to the Animal Welfare clinic as often as he can, and offers to do whatever jobs he can do like feeding animals, cleaning and mopping up. He assists Bev Shaw in killing those unwanted dogs

of their owners. He is the one who holds the unwanted dogs while Bev Shaw injects the drug to the dogs to kill it. He believes that he will be used to the work, but the more killings he assists in, the more nervous he gets since he loves those abandoned dogs so much that their death makes him cry. He does not understand what is happening to him.

The dogs are too many for others, but they are not too many for David. Moreover, he is ready to take care of them offering him to the service of the dead dogs. Thus, Lurie's ethics for animals reflects in his service to them in *Disgrace*. Regarding Lurie's sympathetic treatment of the dogs, Danta says that "Lurie's sympathetic treatment of the dead dogs certainly puts him in a relation to his own death—but a relation to death that is so pure it is somehow unconcerned with the possibility of personal redemption or grace"(732). Danta believes that David is not trying to get back his previous graceful position that he had before falling into disgrace by treating the dead dogs sympathetically. Though David begins to compensate his public shame by treating the abandoned dogs honorably, this real action does not yet open the possibility of personal grace. But David does not seem to care whether he achieves personal grace or not, he keeps on treating the dead dogs sympathetically.

He is fond of a particular dog among the dogs in the holding pens. It is a young male dog with a withered left hindquarter which it drags behind it. No visitor has shown any interest in adopting it, and its period of grace is almost over because soon it needs to be injected. He likes playing with this dog. When he plays the banjo, the dog is fascinated by the sound of it: "When he strums the strings, the dog sits up, cocks its head, listens. When he hums Teresa's line. . . . the dog smacks its lips and seems on the point of singing too, or howling" (215).

One Sunday, David and Bev Shaw are busy in the clinic where he brings in the unwanted and crippled dogs and cats to be killed. He concentrates all his attention on the animals they are

killing and “giving it what he no longer has difficulty in calling by its proper name: love” (219). After killing these unwanted animal, the young dog that he is fond of and plays with him is left. He does not want it to be killed. He wants to save it for some days due to its love. Bearing the dog in his arms like a lamb, he says to Bev Shaw, “I am giving him up” (220). Alice Brittan observes that “when David holds the dogs as they take the needle, even though their terror makes him tremble and weep” (489). David is so loving and kind to animals that he weeps for them when they are being killed. Thus, such a rigid or unbending natured David in the first half of *Disgrace* turns into a kind and soft hearted man in the second half. The critic, Rita Barnard states that “Lurie’s humble and self-imposed duties are thus a way of paying homage to the unusual quality of all once living things” (221). The dog he is giving up has been presented as affectionate and endearing.

After Lucy’s rape, David experiences how one feels to be the victim of trauma. Now, he realizes how much he had troubled Melanie and her family. He puts himself in the position of Melanie’s father, whose daughter has been abused by him, and realizes how much her father is suffering from it. He finally confesses that he has caused trauma to Melanie, and now, he no more blames his desire of impulse for abusing Melanie. He tells Bev Shaw: ““Yes, there was a young woman. But I was the troublemaker in that case. I caused the young woman in question at least as much trouble as she caused me”” (147). David begins to sympathize with Melanie that the trial is a trial for her too; although she too has suffered from it. Thus, he begins to confess his crime at the end of the novel, which he had never done before. As Marais points out, “He seems to transform, his desire for the Other into responsibility for the Other” (174).

Like David, other characters of the novel also love animals. They are animal welfare people who are so cheerful to work as volunteers for Animal Welfare League. For instance, Bev

Shaw runs a clinic for animal where a handful of volunteers work. David also begins to work at this clinic as a volunteer. Bev Shaw has to kill the old and unwanted dogs injecting them with lethal, on their owner's request. This task of killing the dogs upsets her as she: . . . hides her face, blows her nose. 'It's nothing. I keep enough lethal for bad cases, but we can't force the owners. It's their animal, they like to slaughter in their own way. What a pity! Such a good old fellow, so brave and straight and confident! (83)

Bev Shaw's love to these pets is expressed in the above quoted extract as she is involved in releasing the trauma of Africa's suffering beasts. Zembylas mentions that "responsibility for the Other is constituted by a relationship with the Other that comes from respect for each individual without expectations for any exchange" (226). His opine regarding ethical responsibility for the Other is true in the case of Bev Shaw, a black poor woman who serves animals in an animal clinic, and moreover, helps David and Lurie when they are in the trauma of rape and disgrace. Bev Shaw and her husband frequently visit and serve David and Lucy when they are suffering from the trauma of rape and robbery. They care for Lucy and David which gives them a feeling of being secure.

Lucy also loves animals. She treats animals like human beings. For instance, she loves the abandoned dog named Kathy which is old and unwanted to be adopted by people. She expresses her love to this dog, thus:

The irony is, she must have offspring all over the district who would be happy to share their homes with her. But it's not in their power to invite her. They are part of the furniture, part of the alarm system. They do us the honor of treating us like gods, and we respond by treating them like things. (78)

At the time when she is gang-raped and her dogs are shot by the rapists, Lucy, forgetting her own trauma of rape, expresses her deep love to those dogs which are crying in agony before they die due to over pain. Her ethical responsibility for others forgetting her own sufferings is revealed when she calls those wounded dogs “My darlings, my darlings” (97).

When Lucy sees Pollux, the young rapist, at Petrus house, she suggests to her father that they should behave with him as if nothing has happened to them. Lucy even sympathizes with the boy, her own rapist and requests her father not to get angry with him since getting angry does not help them and it is not wise to take revenge on him as he is not mentally sound: “‘Don't get indignant, David, it doesn't help. According to Petrus, Pollux has dropped out of school and can't find a job. I would steer clear of him if I were you. I suspect there is something wrong with him’” (200). Thus, asMargalit says “Lucy excuses her own rapist,that helps to overcome the trauma” (169). Lucy forgives her rapist that helps her overcome her trauma.

Lucy protects the boy, her rapist who peers into the bath room where Lucy is taking a bath, from the thrashing of Lurie. When Lurie knows that the boy is one of the rapists of Lucy, he gets angry with the boy and decides to take revenge on him. But Lucy does not agree with her father's idea about taking revenge with the boy. Lucy tries to convince her father about not hurting the boy, and helping to make the situation peaceful:

That is reckless talk, David. If you want to think like that, please keep it to yourself. Anyway, what you think of him is beside the point. He is here, he won't disappear in a puff of smoke, he is a fact of life. . . . David, we can't go on like this. Everything had settled down, everything was peaceful again, until you came back. I must have peace around me. I am prepared to do anything, make any sacrifice, for the sake of peace.' (208)

The way Lucy reminds her father is a clear evidence of her ethics and responsibility for others. She wants to develop harmonious relation with her neighbors by convincing her father that they cannot go on any further by taking revenge to one another. Moreover, she is ready to sacrifice her life for the sake of peace.

Petrus, Lucy's neighbor, a colored man, helps Lucy in her sufferings. He fulfills the ethics as an infinite responsibility to others in *Disgrace*, by providing Lucy with care and security when she is feeling insecure at her farm house. Petrus assures her of security and protection from any future traumatic event occurring to her life again. So, Lucy owes him a lot: "Petrus slaved to get the market garden going for Lucy. Without Petrus Lucy wouldn't be where she is now" (140). Petrus is ready to be the farm manager of Lucy if she and her father go back to Cape Town and he is prepared to keep her part of the farm running in her absence. It is not his intention to capture Lucy's land as he knows that Lucy will come back one day as she is very attached to her farm. He stretches out his helpful hands to both Lurie and Lucy when they are undergoing hard times of their lives and he even reminds Lurie to forget what has happened to them. He tells him "it is bad. But it is finish" (201). Thus it's clear how David, Lucy, Bev Shaw and Petrus fulfill their ethical responsibility of serving others in their trauma in *Disgrace*.

CHAPTER FOUR

SHIFTING OF POWER

This chapter deals with sexual power abuse in J.M Coetzee's *Disgrace*. It mainly focuses on the two characters David and Petrus and how these two men use women to gain their power and make a shift in their power. At the beginning the male characters tear women apart till they become totally insecure so they could control them completely. Petrus remains this way but as time goes by, David's thoughts of women gradually changes. David, who started out as strong, becomes weak, and Petrus develops in the opposite direction which is the result of their relations to women.

David and Petrus have different intentions with using women. Petrus gains economic and material winnings and that is because he has always been poor and riches is therefore what he looks for. For David it is harder to tell what he gains from using women. His way of acting towards women is a consequence of his troubled life, since he lost his wife. David at least gains sexual pleasure and takes advantage of the position he possesses when he uses Soraya and Melanie. The narrator makes Petrus' way of acting and using women seem less accepted than David's. This may be because the story is focused on David and not much on what Petrus' thoughts are. Lowry claims, however, that it needs to be kept in mind that there are two patriarchs in the story, one worse than the other. David's actions cannot be considered more acceptable for this reason. The rapes themselves might be seen as some kind of payback from both David's and Petrus' sides and function as a tool to show their power. Petrus' rape may seem to be some kind of payback towards the white inhabitants in South Africa because of the power they possess. Stepien states that "the harassments of Lucy also functions as a concept which makes David see his own actions towards Melanie from another angle" (217). The actions

against David during the violent night may be also some kind of payback towards the white male and to show that he should not come to the country side and think that he is better than anyone else. The story takes place after apartheid but the memories are not gone. Elizabeth Lowry claims that this is one of the reasons why the three black males rape Lucy, citing the following passage: But why did they hate me so? I had never set eyes on them.[...]It was history speaking through them,' he offers at last. 'A history of wrong. Think of it that way, if it helps. It may have seemed personal, but it wasn't. It came from the ancestors.'(156)

South Africa's history is still present in the story and the portraits of white and black people are brutally showed. It could all be a fight to show who is in charge. David's rape seems to be more about not seeing women as worthy but he also struggled for Soraya, the black woman. He spent time mentioning many times that Soraya is black and he also takes time to hate the black men for raping Lucy, a white innocent girl. According to Derek David's old fashioned thoughts of black and white people are still present. And also as Attridge claims

The fact that David is a white male is important to keep in mind, when it comes to power, especially in South Africa after Apartheid and on occasions he tries to show himself better than everyone else as the white male, which could be remaining from apartheid and the subjugation of the black inhabitants. (317)

David is removed from his work and accused of having a sexual relation with one of his students and this is when all of David's power is taken away from him because of his inability to deal with his desire. He loses his profession and respect amongst people in his town. This is when David is seen getting weaken and he flees out to the country side to his daughter Lucy to stay with her. David's desire for women becomes his burden and he cannot control it, and the

loss of his work is a result of it. David once tries to explain his burden to Lucy, but as a comparison to a dog:

. . . when we were still living in Kenilworth, the people next door had a dog, a golden retriever. It was a male. Whenever there was a bitch in the vicinity it would get excited and unmanageable, and with Pavlovian regularity the owners would beat it. This went on till the poor dog did not know what to do. At the smell of a bitch it would chase around the garden with its ears flat and its tail between its legs, whining, trying to hide.' [...] A dog will accept the justice of that: a beating for a chewing. But desire is another story. No animal will accept the justice of being punished for following its instincts'. (89- 90).

This could be considered an excuse for his own behavior and his daughter Lucy asks him: ““So males must be allowed to follow their instincts unchecked? Is that the moral?” (90). Whereupon he answers: “What was ignoble about the Kenilworth spectacle was that the poor dog had begun to hate its own nature. It no longer needed to be beaten. It was ready to punish itself” (90). David states that “desire is a burden we could well do without” (90) and he makes himself comparable to a dog and its hatred of its own nature. David sees the problem with his desire and he hates what it does to him. He cannot control it but no matter how hard he punishes himself he cannot deny his own nature. Desire is something uncontrollable to David, it leads him to women and he shows his power through it but at the end of the day, he also loses his power through his desire for women.

Petrus is introduced halfway through the story and the first time David and Petrus meet their power is more or less equal but from here, their positions starts to change. David has lost his profession and stays at the farm and Petrus has a job at Lucy's. He works as her dog-keeper

and lives next to them. The lines between the powerful rich white male and black powerless farmer becomes unclear. Petrus will eventually be very powerful since he uses sex and women, more specifically, Lucy to gain power, while David uses the same but he loses his power.

Disgrace does not reveal much about Petrus and this is because Petrus is always described from David's perspective. Therefore his own thoughts are unclear. Petrus' thoughts about women are revealed two times and especially once when he talks about the fact that he is having a baby 'The baby is coming in October. We hope he will be a boy. Always it is best if the first one is a boy. Then he can show his sisters – show them how to behave. A girl is very expensive. He rubs thumb and forefinger together. Always money, money, money'(130). The fact that he says that he hopes for a boy because he can show his sisters how to behave, tell a lot about what Petrus actually thinks about women. And second thing is that Petrus hires three men to rape Lucy to scare and tear her apart and then offers her protection by marrying her to get to her property. Graham states that "Petrus shows that women are regarded a property and are in need of protection and should therefore belong to a man" (439). At this point sex becomes a women's weakness but a man's power.

I think I am their territory. They have marked me. They will come back for me.
[...] Hatred . . . When it comes to men and sex, David, nothing surprises me anymore. Maybe for men hating the woman makes sex more exiting. You are a man, you ought to know. (158)

Lucy is having a baby from the rape and to protect her baby she needs someone to protect her and Petrus knows that she cannot turn down his offer. Lucy therefore marries him and Petrus gets what he wants, to become even more powerful. To Petrus, Lucy is just a game and he feels like he needs to play it right. Now when he did, he got everything he wished for.

I don't believe you get the point, David. Petrus is not offering me a church wedding followed by a honeymoon on the wild coast. He is offering an alliance, a deal. I contribute the land, in return for which I am allowed to creep under his wing. Otherwise, he wants to remind me, I am without protection, I am fair game. (203)

Lucy Valerie Graham shows that "this whole event could be seen from a gender perspective, women owning farms in this story are more threatened than men because of the sexual violence and the social oppression" (439). The traditional gender roles could also be taken into consideration since when Lucy gets raped and pregnant, one can assume that she returns into the house to take care of the baby and lets Petrus take care of the farming, placed in the traditional gender roles. Petrus shows no care for Lucy and the way she was raped. Directly after the rape Petrus asks David: "Will Lucy go to the market tomorrow?" (115). This tells a lot about Petrus and his inability to understand a woman's experience of a rape and he never does anything to make amends for his actions. At this point the female inferiority becomes very clear and the usage of women cannot be denied. Women are never given justice in *Disgrace* and they stay subjugated. As Mardorossian states, "David's rape which he himself declares as "not quite rape" is at some degree punished, he loses his job and all of his power, while Petrus' actions never are punished. Petrus gains from it and never get punished (76). Hence the women are never given their justice.

At the end of *Disgrace* David's and Petrus' lives are totally different from how they were at the beginning. David loses all his power and Petrus gains everything he wishes for Petrus' actions are never punished and also never changes his way of being. David gains understanding and sympathy from the rape of Lucy. He apologizes to Melanie's father for the pain he caused their family. At this point he realizes what he caused them because he went through the same

process with Lucy. He now looks for forgiveness and some kind of catharsis and his way of seeing women completely changes. He once told Melanie “A woman’s beauty is to share” (16). There are many times David points out his rights to follow his desire when it comes to women and it also becomes his burden and it makes him lose his power. When he at the end asks Mr. Isaacs for forgiveness, he tells his side of the story:

A fire: what is remarkable about that? If a fire goes out, you strike a match and start another one. This is how I used to think. Yet in the olden days people worshipped fire. They thought twice before letting a flame die, a flame-god. It was that kind of flame your daughter kindled in me. Not hot enough to burn me up, but real: real fire’. Burned – burnt – burnt up.(166)

He tells Mr. Isaacs that he could not resist Melanie. He usually finds one woman and then let her go to find another one but Melanie was different. Yet in the olden days, people thought twice before letting love die to light a new love, back then it was real and lasting. With Melanie it was real. The fire was not hot enough to touch him fully, but it was real. He could not let go of her. He was the one starting a fire and he forced himself upon her. This is comparable to when David is locked inside the bathroom and the three men started a fire on his face while they raped Lucy, “A flame dances soundlessly on the back of his hand [...] He stands up, beats out the last of the flames on his clothes. [...] Everything is tender, everything is burned. Burned, burnt” (96-97).

The flame at that time did not start in David, but was started by someone else’s desire, and then forced upon Lucy and David. The last time when a flame was set in David, he forced himself upon Melanie. This fire could be seen figuratively. It could be seen as the difference between one setting the fire himself and being forced into someone else’s flame. The flame could

be comparable to desire, once a flame is started, one would do anything to get there but being a victim of someone else's flame could be very unpleasant. At the end David's transformation could be seen very clearly. He started seeing women as independent and not as a part of a man's possession. It makes him wiser and free from troubles. Though he loses all his visible power, he gains an inner peace. He releases the perfect picture he had about himself and once he compares himself to a dog: "Perhaps that is what I must learn to accept. To start at ground level. With nothing. Nothing with nothing but. With nothing. No cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity." 'Like a dog.' 'Yes, like a dog'" (205).

At the end of the story, David works with Bev and puts dogs to their last sleep. There is one dog left with which David has become close to, which he possibly wants to spare:

There is only the young dog left, the one who likes music, the one who, given a half chance, would already have lolloped after his comrades into the clinic building, into the theatre with its zinc-topped table where the rich, mixed smells still linger, including one he will not yet have met with in his life: the smell of expiration, the soft, short smell of the released soul. (219)

David has more or less found himself in this dog. The last two lines in the book says: "Bev asks David "Are you giving him up?" 'Yes, I am giving him up'" (220). This quotation shows that David accepts his loss of power and what has happened. He leaves his past behind and gives up the old David with the old habits and his power. He described himself earlier as a comparison to Lucifer: "He does what he feels like. He doesn't care if it is good or bad. He just does it. [...] He doesn't act on principle but on impulse, and the source of his impulses is dark to him" (33).

He now leaves the “dark source” and burden behind to find a new self and new thought about life as a released soul, released from desire. In examining Petrus and David’s power and the subjugation of women it is seen that David starts out as the most powerful character in the story. According to Derek Attridge,

... feminist readers tend to see David as an unsympathetic character since his “seduction” of women is built on male power and women’s voices are never heard. A discussion of the treatment of gender can be raised and the worrying sexism in the story needs to be questioned. (317)

He is respected but as time goes by, he loses his authority and his power to seduce women starts to fade. The first time David loses his power is when he tries to seduce Melanie. His moves are too old-fashioned and his ability is not what it used to be. His loss of control is also seen when he tries to find Soraya after she disappears and he cannot control her anymore. He loses his good looks in the attack at the farm when the perpetrators burn his face. He becomes more distant to the younger women he tries to seduce. As shown by several quotes David blames many of his actions on his desire of women, which he could not control. He cannot deny his own nature. All these change at the end of the story when he loses all his material stuff and his looks. He then gains another kind of power and realizes that women are more than just the possessions of men and that their voices should be heard just like everyone else.

When David puts dogs to sleep, he leaves his own self behind and gains an inner peace and also some kind of catharsis. Petrus on the other hand starts out as a withdrawn man, who is not very powerful, but eventually he gains more and more power and he gets the last piece when he gets to Lucy’s property which shows a reversed picture of how the story began. It also shows a reversed picture of the white powerful man and the black subjugated man, that once was a big

part of the South African society. Lowry summarizes it in her review: “Lurie has made use of Soraya and Meláni, but there is a lethal symmetry in the fact that his own daughter is used in turn and becomes a chattel of the Petrus clan”. The conversion David goes through is seen when he at the end works side by side with a woman and actually learns from her. He also shows a sign of conversion when he asks Melanie’s father for forgiveness. The rape of Lucy affects the story in many ways. David changes his way of acting towards women and he never uses women after that event since he sees his own actions from another perspective. David started wanting women to speak louder and not more silently as he used to think. The story itself never punishes Petrus, he gains power by sexually violating Lucy to scare her and then get her property. Soraya and Melanie are never heard from again after David uses them and apologies are never given to them personally, therefore it is clear that Justice is never given to the female characters. Hence, the novel cannot be considered a story with a happy ending but it gives an insight into the lives of women in South Africa and their experiences of male superiority.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Coetzee is a literary cascade, with a steady output of fiction and criticism (literary and social) over the last two decades and also he is notable as a great South African writer who grappled with the savage complexity of the apartheid and post-apartheid years. He also took the novel in English into new imaginative and moral territory. From his many outstanding works of fiction, *Disgrace* is unquestionably his masterpiece. *Disgrace* is a searing evocation of post-apartheid South Africa which earned him an unprecedented second Booker Prize.

Disgrace major theme is the struggle between mind and body, spirit and earth. It depicts David's painful separation from the sheltered collegiate utopia of literature and civility, where sex is a harmless past-time, according to David and death is a poetic abstraction, into a state of earthiness, where life is dangerous, death is real, and sex is a fact of life, sometimes a distasteful reality, even a weapon. David will struggle to understand whether both universes can be reconciled, or whether one must get the better of one over the another.

"Coetzee has used numerous symbols in *Disgrace* to convey insecurity, segregation and racial discrimination in South Africa" (1). He has mainly used symbols to show the human tendency to subjugate those who have a quality of "otherness" by dominating, abusing, exploiting and objectifying and also the aftermath of apartheid in South Africa.

Coetzee uses animals to symbolize the aftermath of apartheid in South Africa. Snake, dogs and pigs are mentioned predominantly in the novel to symbolize characters' behavior and settings. Of great importance is the use of dog to symbolize lifestyle in Salem. Salem is mainly a black occupied setting where Lucy and David toil to earn a living and also has used dogs to symbolize low life. Both David and Lucy agree that dog life is painful, lifeless, and without dignity. Moreover, David and Lucy

also agree that dog life offers no cards, rights, weapons or property. By showing the lives and the rights of animals he has tried to depict a profound meditation on another kind of otherness. Meditation takes the form of the punishment and salvation that David finds at Bev's animal shelter, helping her to put down abandoned dogs shows how an unsympathetic man like David has started sympathizing with other creatures.

Coetzee has also used Byron as a significant symbol in the novel. David fancies himself an artist and seducer in the image of Byron. Since David's scholarly interest is Byron, after getting resigned from his Position in the University he decides to write an opera on Lord Byron. his apotheosis, is seen through his trying to write an opera. The composition process is described beautifully but it becomes awful when he tries to shift his focus on the sadistic suffering of its female protagonist, Teresa.

In *Disgrace*, Coetzee has also highlighted the interpersonal moral support that helps one to overcome his/her trauma in their life. He has tried to depict this through the unique father-daughter relationship that exist between David and Lucy. Though Lucy was raised in a home of two academics, she has chosen the life of a farmer and earns money comes from selling flowers and vegetables and the housing of dogs on her farmland. As a white lesbian women, she lives by herself in Salem, South Africa. Lurie on the other hand lives in Cape Town. His livelihood comes not from the work of his hands but from the generation of ideas. Both are caught in devastation that forever changes their lives. Disgrace unites them. Lurie has been fired from his position as professor because of sexual misconduct with a student. Lucy has been raped by three Africans and must bear the shame and humiliation in her community. David rediscovers his role as a father to Lucy both when she welcomes him into her home and when he needs to take care of her after she's raped.

After David is publicly shamed in Cape Town for sleeping with Melanie, he travels to his daughter's farm to temporarily get free from his troubles. Upon his arrival, she asks how long he plans to stay, and he immediately feels the need to clarify that he will not stay for a long time. He says "I'd like to keep your friendship. Long visits don't make for good friends,"(65) thinking that like Rosalind she will be unwilling to support him emotionally.

Don't expect sympathy from me, David, and don't expect sympathy from anyone else either. No sympathy, no mercy, not in this day and age. Everyone's hand will be against you. I blame you and I blame her. The whole thing is disgraceful from beginning to end. Disgraceful and vulgar too. And I am not sorry for saying so. (44)

However, she goes on to say that she knows about his troubles and that won't affect how she treats him. She says "What if we don't call it a visit?" "What if we call it refuge? Would you accept refuge on an indefinite basis?"(65). Lucy not only shows her father that he is welcome to stay for as long as he like, but also that she's willing to give him the support the "refuge" he needs in order to rebuild his life. She doesn't force David to talk about what happened with Melanie or asked him any questions but still gave him the opportunity to talk about his problem if he wants to, unlike his ex-wife Rosalind, who after hearing about the scandal calls him and scolds him for what he's done. Lucy's gentle and accepting approach makes it easier for David to process what has happened to him on his own time and in his own way. But, when it comes time for David to support Lucy in the aftermath of her rape, he fails to show her the same kind of love and caring approach.

In contrast to Lucy's style of offering support, David finds himself incapable of giving his daughter the emotional space she needs after she is raped and he was frequently urging her to make a decision about what to do in the aftermath of her attack, a decision she isn't ready to

make. He is becoming a nag, a bore, but there is no helping that. 'Lucy, it really is time for you to face up to your choices. Either you stay on in a house of ugly memories and go brooding on what happened to you, or you put the whole episode behind you and start a new chapter elsewhere. (155)

Finally she breaks her silence one day telling him how terrible it was to see how much her rapists seemed to hate her. When he asks what she does plan to do, she replies,

There is nothing you can suggest that I haven't been through a hundred times myself. You don't understand what happened to me that day. You are concerned for my sake, which I appreciate, you think you understand, but finally you don't. Because you can't. But whatever I decide I want to decide by myself, without being punished. There are things you just don't understand. (157)

In his way, she shows her father how important it is for her to process this on her own, without any interventions. But David is unwilling to let it happen. He ends up severely beating one of her rapists, a young boy Lucy has told him not to touch because of the boy's mental disability and relationship with Petrus, who lives on her land. Through this action, David shows his unwillingness to stay out of Lucy's affairs, and his actions make them apart because Lucy asks him to stay elsewhere after his violent eruption. By comparing and contrasting David and Lucy's methods of supporting one another Coetzee tries to show that sometimes just a person's moral support is enough for a loved one to get through a difficult period, a lesson David doesn't learn until he moves out of Lucy's house and slowly accepts that she has the right to process her trauma the way she wants.

In *Disgrace*, J.M Coetzee analyses the nature of human power and how the men in *Disgrace* have used men to make a shift in their power. A complex question what is it that makes

a man lies at the heart of *Disgrace*. On one hand, masculinity can be defined as one specific side of gender coin. But masculinity isn't just about gender alone; it's about how gender affects one's actions, identity and attitudes. In *Disgrace*, Coetzee has dealt with the more complicated issues about masculinity, particularly through the ways male characters treat women. Petrus says that he wants his firstborn to be a boy "We are praying for a boy. Always it is best if the first one is boy. Then he can show his sisters- show them how to behave. A girl is very expensive, Always money, money,money" (130). He explains that boys should show girls the proper way to behave which shows an inbuilt attitude about masculinity in opposition to femininity. The three intruders' rape of Lucy is an example of how masculinity can be used as a means of suppressing femininity. Thus it's clear that in *Disgrace*, male characters assert their masculinity by dominating women. Then men of *Disgrace* don't need to assert their masculinity through any particular acts instead they can act as they please simply because they are men.

David's thirst for power in the context of sex is made clear when he visits a prostitute named Soraya, with whom he assumes a position of dominance because he can pay her to do whatever he wants and she must present herself in a way that will please him. However, because of his power he just thought only about himself and what will satisfy him.

David's thirst for power through relationships becomes even clear when he followed Melanie, a student in one of his classes and manipulated her into having sex with him. When he convinces her to come to his house for a drink, she doesn't feel comfortable refusing his offer because she knows that he's an authority figure in her life. Even he doesn't hesitate to tell what he wants saying, "You're very lovely, he says .I am going to invite you to do something reckless. Stay. Spend night with me." (16). This shows how confident and powerful he feels in relation to Melanie. And when asks why she should stay, he says, "Because a woman's beauty does not

belong to her alone. It is part of the bounty she brings into the world. She has a duty to share it.”(16)which reveals that he thinks he has some kind of right over Melanie.

When he was in trouble for harassing Melanie, he told a reporter that he didn't regret what he did, instead told him that “I was enriched by the experience”(56). This statement shows how superior he feels because he thinks that he has power and could exercise it over anyone because he was not only not ready to apologise for what he has done to Melanie but also he tells it with pride that he was entirely enriched by the experience and also shows clearly that David was only thinking about himself even after he was publicly ashamed. Later even after he is forced to resign as a result of his sexual behavior, his thirst to feel superior remains the same because he tries to have sex with Bev Shaw, a woman he thinks of as a simple and unattractive. All of this shows that he is comfortable in relationships that have uneven power dynamics and his thirst for power is present in all of his sexual relationships because he thinks that every person he sleeps with is inferior to him.

According to him, it is acceptable, to treat women like property. Not even once he wonders why he got divorced twice, he tends to think that his place in the world is meant to be in the arms of women and the other way around. David believes that he is in control of everything in his life in the beginning of *Disgrace* since he strongly feels that all he does is right. David says that one needs to separate the power relations and sexual relations but he does not seem to separate them and he is satisfied with having both at the same time. He wants as much power as possible over everything in his life, including his work and his affair with women.

Stubborn and self-centered, he feels it superficial to make a statement of guilt and apology just to save his skin. As a male, David basically tries to have sex with everything female. As a female, Lucy seeks protection from males. David cannot believe Lucy accepts this

role, not least because she is a strong-willed individual, as well as a lesbian with no male attachments. Because of these thoughts he blames himself for thinking there is no more to life than sex. In the end he's the one who becomes jobless, emotionally unsupported, and widely disrespected which proves that not only he was wrong to think of himself as more powerful than the women, but approaching romantic relationships with such a selfish attitude leads to loneliness and despair.



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Multicultural Conflicts in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

RIYASHLIN K.

(REG. NO. 19APEN20)



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ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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APRIL 2021

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	01
Two	Hybridity and Multicultural conflicts	11
Three	Dislocation and Identity crisis	21
Four	Narrative Technique and Stylistic devices	31
Five	Summation	40
	Works Cited	46

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Multicultural Conflicts in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the award of Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Riyashlin K. during the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Ms. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Dr. F. Mary Priya

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

PRINCIPAL

EXAMINER

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **Multicultural Conflicts in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundarnar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2021

RIYASHLIN K.

THOOTHUKUDI

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PREFACE

Kiran Desai has written only two novels, yet she deserves her own place in Indian Literature. She is one of the budding writers in contemporary Indian Literature.

Kiran Desai's second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* explores the lives of characters that are trapped in India's class system both the lower class and the upper class. The characters' hopes and the ultimate dream of immigrating to America, finally escaping the rigid caste system of their homeland is portrayed exactly.

The first chapter **Introduction** throws lights on Kiran Desai's life, works and achievement in literature which proves as the Indian Diasporic author.

The second chapter focuses on the **Hybridity and Multicultural Conflicts** analyses the deep roots of both motherland and foreign land culture. Then it shows how the fragmentation occurs when the root tries to adapt to its new land.

The third chapter focuses on the **Dislocation and Identity Crisis** that how each character in the novel undergo sufferings to establish their own identity.

The fourth chapter depicts **Narrative Technique and Stylistic devices**. In this chapter, how Desai's stylistic devices enrich her language and also how she succeeds to create her own mark with her innovative skills are discussed.

The fifth chapter projects all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters.

The researcher has consistently referred to and resorted to the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook 8th Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature consists of those writing which interpret the meanings of nature and life, in words of charm and power, touched with the personality of the author, in artistic forms of permanent interest. The seed for Indian Literature in English language was sown during the period of the British rule in India. Day by day that seed had grown and blossomed into a green tree abundant with fragrant flowers and ripe fruits. The fruits were tasted not only by the natives but were equally enjoyed by the foreigners. In modern times, it was protected by a number of writers who are getting awards and privileges all over the world.

The story of Indian English novel is really the story of changing India. Writing in English has come quite a long way from the mere use of English language to the authentic tool for expressing one's ideas, thoughts, concepts and imagination. There was a time when education was a rare opportunity and speaking English was unnecessary. It has attained maturity, but it is not that it suddenly emerged from nowhere.

The beginning of the English literature movement in India was the first three decades of the 19th century and it was a slow incubation. Before the arrival of British in Indian, English was considered as a foreign language. English Language influenced several fields such as education, literature and medium of communication to name a few. Indian English Literature refers to work by Indian writers who write in the English Language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the many regional and native languages of India. English literature originated in India speaks of its own cultural heritage and value system. It provides an opportunity to make a deep

dive in Indian consciousness and sensibility. Indian writers, poets, novelists, essayists and dramatists have been making crucial contributions to the world literature since Pre-Independence era. It had attained self-sufficient status in the kingdom of world literature. This movement has continued to reflect Indian culture, tradition, social values and even Indian history through the picture of life in India.

In the Elite and the middle classes, English has obtained a rare benefit and popularity in India. It is used by writers to give shape to the conflicting situations and issues that challenge the human soul. It expresses the innate talents of the writers. The writers made conscious effort to express the conceit and change of an individual's consciousness through the language. They aptly proved the expansiveness and spirit of the Indian English movement.

The struggle for Independence had huge impact on the sense of national consciousness among the literary profession. The freedom struggle showed images of the awakened Indians to regain their freedom from the British. The writers were able to grow their point of view, which ultimately helped to motivate and guide the masses. Thus the action on religious was replaced by concerns on socio-political issues. Indian writers in English have made the most significant contribution to the field of the novel. Indian novel has grown considerably in bulk, variety and maturity. The development of Indian novel follows certain definite patterns. The Indian English novel erupted in the fiery talks of Henry Derozio, the spiritual prose of Tagore and the pacifist dictums preached by Gandhi. With the coming of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan, the Indian English novel had begun its journey.

The early novels in India were not just patriotic depiction of Indianness. Niradh Chaudhuri viewed India without the crown skeptically. He discarded the fiery

patriotism and spiritualism that were 'Brand India' and mourned the absence of colonial rule. As India grew out of her obsession with freedom and viewed streak of imperialism. Now with the Indian Diaspora a reckoning force in the publishing world, Indian English speaks a global tongue, unconfined to any particular culture or heritage. The Indian Diaspora raised the curtain on the fantastic mythical realities that were part of domestic conversations in the villages. Salman Rushdie fascinates critics with his 'chutnification' of history and language. Amitav Ghosh dabbles in postcolonial realities and Vikram Seth fuses poetry and prose with an air of Victorian grandeur

Indian writing in English has commended liberal approval in both home and abroad. It has designed a new track, a new vision that is filled with unwavering faith and hope, myths and traditions, customs and rites. The works of Indian English Fiction revealed that their works were not an imitation of English literary pattern but highly original and intensely Indians in both theme and spirit.

The history of Indian English literature is one and a half centuries old, and many writers contributed to the different genres. The novel as literary form was new to India, and it was influenced by the British writers in the nineteenth century. The novel as a clear genre of literature has witnessed extraordinary growth in contemporary society. The novel offers greater flexibility and freedom. This freedom and flexibility of novelistic communication attracted a number of creative talents to the field. In novelistic discussion mostly, history, politics and social life became tools that explain deep shades of life. The Indian novels in English established itself as a part of Indian literature and claimed its unique identification.

The pioneer of this literature movement was Raja Ram Mohan Roy. In the beginning political writing in the novel was dominant in Raja Ram Mohan Roy's works. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is considered by many historians as the Father of the Indian Renaissance. In 2004, Roy was ranked number 10 in BBC's poll of the greatest Bengali of all time.

The founders of true Indo-English novel are Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan's and Raja Rao. In *Coolie* by Mulk Raj Anand, the social disparity in India is laid bare. In R. K. Narayan's imaginary village Malgudi, the invisible men and women of our teeming population come to life and act out life with all its perversities. R. K. Narayan was a purely and prolific novelist. Raja Rao was a child of Gandhian age which is revealed in his work. But as a user of foreign language he also confesses his limitation in a 'Forward' given by himself in his first novel *Kanthapura* in 1938.

In the forties, G. V. Desani's *All About H. Hatterr* (1948) made a major breakthrough in formal experimentation and became a masterpiece of remarkable artistry. After 1950's Indian novelist moved from public to private sphere. They began to delineate in their works the individual's quest for the self in all varied forms. Novelists like Anita Desai and Nayantara Sahgal changed through their works the face of Indian English novel and their works contain seeds of future development. Anita Desai deals with the psychological aspects of her characters and explores the inner climate of her sensibility which add new dimension to the achievement of Indian women writers in English fiction.

Among the Contemporary writers, Amitav Ghosh has shown his genius in the Indian English Fiction. His two novels – *The Circle of Reason* (1986) and *The Shadow Lines* (1988) establishes Ghosh as the finest writer who was born out of the

post Midnight's Children revolution in Indo-Anglian fiction. Vikram Seth attained a dizzy height of success with *The Golden Gate* (1986) and *A Suitable Boy* (1993). He stunned the literary world with the novel *A Suitable Boy*. Upamanyu Chatterjee, with his novel *English August* (1988) got great success. His tone was ironic and he hit all the foibles of the Indian bureaucracy. His contemporary Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* (1989) is of the greatest achievements of Indian English fiction.

Woman is inherently artistic and their literature is closely related to each other because it requires a lot of artistic creativity. The Indian women have significantly contributed to the overall world literature as equal with men writers. Woman writers explore old wives tales, condemn exploitation and try to make sense of the first changing pace of the new world. Kamala Das explores women's plight in India and the world. Shashi Deshpande paint characters who blame their own complacency. Arundhati Roy begins her story without a beginning and does not really end it while Jhumpa Lahiri's crafted tales move at a perfect pace. Arundhati Roy is one such talented writer of the post Midnight's Children who shows real psychological depth while conveying the realities of culture and history. Her novel *The God of Small Things* has earned much critical attention all over the world and fetched her Booker Prize.

Indian diasporic writers are at the centre stage since last decade because of their capturing works. Indian Diaspora occupies second largest place in the world. Diasporic writing occupies a great place of significance between cultures and countries. The characteristics features of diasporic writing involve the quest for identity and nostalgia. Some of the notable Indian Women diasporic writers are Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Meera Syal, Kamala Markandeya, Anita Desai and Kiran Desai.

Bharathi Mukherjee is an Indo American writer and Professor at the University of California. She wrote numerous works that cover both fiction and non-fiction. She has won National Book Critics Award in 1988 for *The Middle and Other Stories*. Her other novels are *Jasmine* and *Wife. The Middle Man and Other Stories* present the themes of immigration while *Jasmine* is the story of woman who is reluctant to accept the outdated traditional society. Jhumpa Lahiri was born to Indian parents from London who settled in the USA after her birth. Lahiri's debut collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies* in 1999, brought laurels to her by clinching Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Kamala Markandeya born in Mysore belongs to a Hindu family. She is not only a writer but journalist and activist too. Her novels *A Silence of Desire*, *The Nowhere Man*, *The Coffer Dams*, *Two Virgins*, *The Golden Honey Comb* are translated into more than dozen languages with the themes of the pathetic plight of a poor peasant. Anita Desai is an Indian writer and professor of Humanities at Massachusetts. Her name was shortlisted for the Booker Prize three times. Desai's novel *Fire on Mountains* won Sahitya Academy Award in the year 1978. Her works focuses on family matters about women. In her work *Custody* she describes the problem of alienation of a college teacher from his deep rooted culture. Among these writers the most striking is Kiran Desai, the third recipient of Man Booker Prize after Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy.

Kiran Desai is one of the talented and ambitious younger Indian diasporic writer was born in India in 1971 and educated in India, England and the United states. Kiran Desai is one of the most insightful Indian novelists who got recognition worldwide with her two superb novels. Kiran then migrated to foreign and spent her childhood in Pune and Mumbai. She is the daughter of famous writer Anita Desai. Her mother creates good cultural atmosphere at home which have enormous

contribution to make her a prolific writer. Both mother and daughter lived in London for a year after leaving India. After one year they moved to the United States where she completed her studies. She studied creative writing at Bennington College, Hollins University and Columbia.

Kiran Desai's first novel marked the beginning of her successful career and she obtained good compliment from well-known writer like Salman Rushdie. For Kiran Desai, her first novel fetched the prestigious award Betty Task Award which was given by the Society of Authors of Citizens of the Commonwealth of Nations. Kiran Desai got this award because it was the best new novels among the writers under the age of 35. Kiran also won the Man Booker Prize for *The Inheritance of Loss* in 2006 and also Vodafone Crossword Award and National Book Circle Fiction Award in 2007. Besides these awards she was short listed for the award of Orange Prize for Fiction for her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* in 2007. Again in the same year she was shortlisted for another prestigious prize Kiriyama Pacific Rim Book Prize and British Book Awards Decibel Writer. Kiran Desai got tremendous success in the very beginning of her literary career. Desai also achieved a victory which had repeatedly eluded her mother. These literary awards became a motivating factor for Kiran Desai to write more novels in future.

Kiran Desai first came to limelight after publication of her wonderful novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* in 1998. Desai took almost four years to complete this novel and received accolades from such notable figures as Salman Rushdie. It is set in the village of Shahkot and follows the exploits of a young man Sampath Chawla trying to avoid the responsibilities of adult life. Fed up with his life in Shahkot, Sampath goes to a guava orchard and settles in a guava tree, where he uses the gossip that he learned while working at the post office to convince people. He is a

clairvoyant and so he becomes a popular ‘holy man.’ Desai based this book on a real life story where a man Kapila Pradhan lived up a tree for 15 years. This has been the main inspiration for Desai and as a result her book shows a lot of features that relate and replicate that story. In September 2007, she was a guest in Private Passion the biographical music discussion programme hosted by Michael Berkley on BBC Radio 3. In May 2007, she was the featured author at the inaugural Asia House Festival of Asian Literature.

Desai’s second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* has been widely praised by the critics throughout Asia, Europe and the United States. It is set in a crumbling, isolated house at a foot of Mount Kanchenjunga. An embittered judge lives there as he wants to retire in peace from a world he has found too messy for justice, when his orphaned granddaughter, Sai arrives on his doorstep. The judge’s cook watches over her distractedly for his thoughts are claimed by his son, Biju who is hop scotching from one gritty New York restaurant to another on an elusive search for a green card. The major theme in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is closely related to colonialism and the effects of post-colonialism, the loss of identity and the way it travels through generation as a sense of loss. Some characters snub those who embody the Indian way of life and others are angered by anglicised Indians who have lost their tradition.

Appreciating Desai as a novelist, The Hindu writes that Desai’s greatest asset lies in her being able to infuse a sense of compassion for each of her characters. Speaking about the global issues which rise in the novel, Publishers Weekly states that Desai deftly shuttles between the first and third worlds, enlightening the pain of exile, the obscurities of post-colonialism and the blinding wish for ‘a better life’ where one person’s wealth means another person’s poverty. The New York Times and Sunday Book Reviews states that Kiran Desai’s extraordinary new novel manages

to explore with the closeness and vision that every contemporary international issues such as globalization, multiculturalism, economic inequality, fundamentalism and terrorist violence are relieved by much humour, *The Inheritance of Loss* may strike many readers as offering an unrelentingly bitter view. But then, as Orhan Pamuk wrote that people in the West are barely aware of this awesome feeling of humiliation that is experienced by most of the world's population which neither magical realistic novels that endow poverty and foolishness with charm nor the exoticism of popular travel literature manages to fathom. This is the invisible emotional reality Desai uncovers as she describes the lives of people fated to experience modern life as a continuous affront to their notions of order, dignity and justice. Jenifer Berman and The Los Angeles Times review in a positive way that *The Inheritance of loss* takes places in Kalimpong, an Indian village in the eastern Himalayas on the border with Nepal. In the shadow of these great mountains and their 'wizard phosphorescence' a handful of characters must find their own ways in a society alternately romancing its colonial past and trying to keep pace with a modernized future. If *Hullabaloo in the Gauva Orchard* established Desai as an expert storyteller, *The Inheritance of Loss* distinguishes her as a writer of note. The small canvas of Himalayan life, evocatively as it is wrought is merely a jumping-off point. The picture Desai paints here is much broader, a deft and often witty commentary on cultural issues that are all too familiar in an interconnected world where migration and the accompanying blight of bigotry have become an international norm.

Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, *Hullabaloo in the Gauva Orchard*, makes clear to her attention to expand her reach from the narrow boundaries of her first novel. Unlike her first novel that ends in all raucous bang of comic eccentricity, the prevailing mood in *The Inheritance of Loss* is one of implacable bitterness and

despair. Full of pathos and tenderness the novel presents its characters as ultimately frail human beings struggling in a search of love and happiness. Desai's novels are full of wisdom and subtle parallels, it is both funny and bitterly sad and generally optimistic. Desai's scope is based looking at the consequences of large cultural and political forces for both people and individuals.

My second chapter will be a discussion on the Conflicts of Hybridity and Multiculturalism.

Chapter Two

Hybridity and Multicultural Conflict

The novel *The Inheritance of Loss* deals with various issues of the global world such as multiculturalism, economic disparities and immigration. The issues which are recognized explain the journey and opportunities to see and identify various backgrounds that demonstrate a part of multicultural society. Each character portrays the feeling and thoughts to the readers which give physical and emotional closeness.

The story takes place in two places and the first place is in Kalimpong, a town near Darjeeling, which is in the northern most eastern point of India. It is bordered by Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan. There was much ethnic strife which has existed for decades and was worsened when the British took control of India and redrew borders to the discontent of the different ethnic people in the area. Multiculturalism incorporates the diversity of racial population composed of indigenous, immigrant and refugee communities with the regard to languages, cultures, religious beliefs and social organization. According to C. W. Watson, “multiculturalism compels us to think through the social and collective dimensions of diversity” (107). Multiculturalism is associated with a situation where people cannot find themselves in a specific location but because of its egalitarian perspective, the new and distanced reality advocates inauthentic since it loses the defining cultural legacy of the marginalized people.

Multiculturalism is a state of cultural and ethnic diversity within the demographic of social space. When different cultures grow in the same space in harmony then the society is called multicultural. Multiculturalism is not a political

doctrine or any philosophical view but it is a perspective of viewing of human life. Human beings are culturally embedded that they grow up in a culturally structured world where they organize their lives and maintain social relations in terms of culturally derives system of meaning and significance.

The first multicultural conflict in Desai's novel takes place in 1986 in Kalimpong, high in Northeastern Himalayas. The main characters living here are the judge, the cook and the Sai. Desai introduces her characters as they live their difficulties in the background of continuing fights. At the beginning of the story, it is rumoured that the insurrection in the hills changed into resistance movement stockpiling men and guns, "It was the Indian-Nepalese this time, fed up with being treated like the minority in a place where they were the majority. They wanted their own country, or at least their own state, in which to manage their own affairs" (9).

The peaceful atmosphere is suddenly disrupted by young boys who come to get judge's rifles. They are guerrilla soldiers and one of them bears a gun. The one with a gun starts to speak to the judge. He says, "No Nepali?" (5). The Judge doesn't understand him so he continues in Hindi and asks them if they have any guns. The Judge says that he doesn't have any and orders them to leave but they want to kill them one by one until they get what they want. Sai is scared and decides to bring the guns. However seizing their guns, the boys still doesn't seem to leave, so they steal their food, rice, sugar, matches and plenty of other stuff. Before leaving they humiliate and insult them. "Say, 'Jai Gorkhas,'" they said to the judge. "Gorkhaland for Gorkhas" (7). Finally the soldiers leave by laughing and carrying off two bags. Sai and the cook avert their look away from the judge because they know that humiliation of a proud man can be a reason to kill. Desai describes the humiliation

and helplessness of their characters against aggressor behavior. They are involuntarily involved in the struggles over “the drawing of borders” (9). The clash between the two cultures of Hindus and Nepalese clearly declares the fact that violence and injustice are skillfully disguised under false pretenses of freedom.

Biju works in America in the restaurant where he meets Saeed, a Muslim immigrant from Zanzibar. He becomes painfully aware of contradictions. Biju has inherited prejudices against both black and Muslim people. He comes to admire Saeed's success in America. He struggles to reconcile the contradiction between his predisposition against Muslims and his great admiration for Saeed. He thinks to himself,

Saeed was kind and he was not Paki. Therefore he was Ok?

Therefore he liked Muslims and hated only Pakis?

Therefore he liked Saeed, but hated the general lot of Muslims?

Therefore he liked Muslims and Pakis and India should see it was all wrong and hand over Kashmir?

No, no, how could that be. (76)

In Biju's line of thinking, we see that Saeed's kindness contradicts the unkindness of Biju which associates with the Pakistanis and Muslims. So, he thinks unkindness is not a necessary condition of being Muslim. Pakistanis could be nice too. Biju goes so far as to suggest momentarily that India should give up the land conflict with Pakistan but cannot accept the proposition. He then considers the contradiction between his prejudices against black people and his admiration for Saeed. Although Saeed tells Biju that his grandmother is Indian, Biju sees Saeed as

purely black and not ethnically hybrid. He questions what they said about black people at home that “in their own country they live like monkeys in trees” (77). Because he admires the way Saeed conduct himself in America, Biju asks himself, “Therefore he hated all black people but liked Saeed? Therefore there was nothing wrong with black people and Saeed? Or Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, or anyone else...?” (76).

Biju recognizes that if what he has heard about black people proves false, then other such identifications may also proves false. This realization produces no change in how he thinks about people. Biju settles himself by forgetting these questions, suppressing the contradiction and sticking to what he has always known to be true. He trusts his inherited prejudices over first- hand experience.

Desai compares Biju to Saeed throughout Biju’s experience in America; a minor character provides an excellent foil for Biju. He does not react to Biju with suspicion or hate like the Pakistani that Biju had worked with. Biju notices that Saeed had been warned of Indians, but he didn’t seem wracked by contradictions a generosity buoyed him and dangled him above such dilemmas. Saeed does not strive after solid knowledge the way that Biju does nor he resist change. His success derives primarily from his ability to adapt to the cultural context in which he finds himself. The flexibility Biju finds in Saeed makes Biju question his own rigidity, his comfort with falling back into prejudices. He observes that,

This habit of hate had accompanied Biju, and he found that he possessed and awe of white people, who arguably had done India great harm, and a lack of generosity regarding almost everyone else, who had never done a single harmful thing to India. (77)

Biju does not find anything particularly wrong with the habit of hate just with directing it at the wrong targets. Saeed adapts easily because he defines the terms in which he lives loosely. His patriotism in America makes an excellent example. He recognizes that some of the things he wants are unavailable to him but unlike Biju he finds a way to pursue those things legally. Desai describes that how Saeed operates in New York City, “He relished the whole game, the way the country flexed his wits and rewarded him; he charmed it, cajoled it, cheated it, felt great tenderness and loyalty toward it” (79).

Saeed seems to have no problem with the apparent contradictions in which he finds himself cheating a system which he feels great loyalty, “When it came time, he who had jigged open every back door, he who had, with photocopier, Wite-Out, and paper cutter, spectacularly sabotaged the system, he would pledge emotional allegiance to the flag with tears in his eyes and conviction in his voice” (79).

Though Saeed’s behaviour is contradictory and he is not to use Biju’s phrase, ‘wracked by contradictions’ largely because he does not worry about absolutes. Whereas Biju cannot change what he thinks of people, even when he sees for himself that what he has been told and has believed is false. Saeed does not pursue solid knowledge and never tries to reconcile contradictions. Saeed’s attitude towards his religion illustrates how he manages to avoid the kinds of internal conflict that paralyze Biju. When explaining why he does not eat pork, Saeed tells Biju that, “First I am Muslim, then I am Zanzibari, then I will BE American” (136). Saeed is advocating assimilation at all costs, actually he establishes a hierarchy of loyalties towards his various identities, putting American at the bottom. He marries a woman just to get a green card. He then tells Biju that he has met another woman, visiting

from Zanzibar, whom he intends to marry. About his current marriage he says, “In four years I get my green card and ... *fsshht*... out of there... I get divorced and I marry for real” (318). Saeed can marry for a green card because he does not consider what he thinks being Zanzibar entails, other than simply having emigrated from Zanzibar. He hides from his fellow countrymen when they come to America seeking help. Saeed’s fraudulent passport gives his name as Rasheed Zulfickar.

The relationship between Sai and the cook is another multicultural conflict in the novel. Sai spends plenty of time with the cook but both of them are aware of the fact that their social status is different. After the incident in Cho Oyu, the cook’s hut is ransacked by the police. Sai witnesses the thoughtless attitude of police towards the cook, “Here they felt comfortable unleashing their scorn, and they overturned his narrow bed, left his few belongings in a heap” (13). The cook is a poor man without any dignity. He even agrees with the approach of the police. “Well they have to search everything,” he said. “Naturally. How are they to know that I am innocent? Most of the time it is the servant that steals” (18).

There is another multicultural conflict that describes the judge’s experience from abroad, which is the most important in Desai’s novel. She describes the judge as somebody who is strongly affected by his experiences. He leaves the home for the first time at the age of twenty. In 1939, he departs from Piphit and reaches Liverpool at first and then he leaves for Cambridge. He leaves his hometown with the strange feelings. When Jemubhai Patel arrives in Liverpool, he notices that a porter carrying passenger’s bags in white. He doesn’t understand that, “a white person picks up a brown person’s bags” (38). Desai wants to point out the Jemubhai’s innocence. As an offspring of colonial legacy, it seems that he believes that white people are superior to

brown. The life in England surprises him, “It took him by surprise because he’d expected only grandness, had’nt realized that here, too, people could be poor and lives unaesthetic lives” (38). He isn’t much impressed by the new atmosphere, but he doesn’t make a good expression. Nobody wants to rent him a room. He visited twenty-two homes before he finds the accommodation and that is the first clash with the British culture. He experiences the first feelings of being immigrant. He studies twelve hours a day and talks to nobody and starts to feel uncomfortably. His “mind had begun to warp; he grew stranger to himself than he was to those around him, found his own skin odd-colored, his own accent peculiar” (40). These experience ruins him for the rest of life and the years spent in England made him angry and arrogant man. The judge’s pretends to be English gentleman but in fact he is an Indian who never found his identity.

The conflict arising between Sai and Gyan appears to be another multicultural conflict. Their background and style each of them is brought up will be the essential problems causing them many troubles. Their love affair carries on until the upcoming political dissatisfaction which is indicated by strikes and processions. They are so much interested in their love and they do not take any notice of changing events. The Nepalis call for their own state and they start revolution. Finally people in Kalimpong are terrorized by GNLFF they live without supplies of water, gas and electricity. Desai also describes how these riots influenced behavior of people against each other. “If you weren’t Nepali it was worse. If you were Bengali, people who had known you your whole life wouldn’t acknowledge you in the street” (279). Thus the relationship between Sai and Gyan comes to an end.

The conflict arising between Lola and Noni is another multicultural conflict in the novel. They live together in a cottage called Mon Ami and discuss the current political situation. Desai's characters discover current multicultural conflicts when Lola holds an opinion that, "those Neps will be after all outsiders now, but especially us Bongs" (127). She continues: "This state-making is the biggest mistake that fool Nehru made. Under his rules any group of idiots can stand up demanding new state and get it, too" (128). However Noni's opinion seems to be different, "But you have to take it from their point of view, said Noni. "First the Neps were thrown out of Assam and then Meghalaya, then there's the king of Bhutan growling against" (128). She thinks Nepalis are afraid of being under pressure. Major of them lived there for many generations. "Why shouldn't Nepali be taught in schools?" (128). Desai describes many various cultural groups who live close to each other and each of them has certain territorial and cultural requirement. Some say that it seems to be the problem because these demands are enforced through violence and hatred. Their conversation goes on when a friend of theirs, Mr. Sen appears there and seems to be interested in the issue that, "Her thoughts and opinions ready-made, polished over the years, rolled out wherever they might be stuffed into a conversation. First heart attack to our country, no, that has never been healed" (129).

The aim of this multicultural conflict is to show a position of women in India. Jemubhai Patel is married to his wife Nimi at the age of 20. She was only 14 at that time. His family decides to marry him because their dream is to send him abroad. As soon as the message that "Jemu would be the first boy of their community to go to an English university" (89) gets around, they receive a marriage proposal. After their wedding party, the whole family is interested in how the wedding night goes on. The first clash with her appears when she keeps his powder puff. He is shouting:

“Someone has been through my belongings” (167). Nobody understands why it is such a problem for him but they do not know that he started to behave in English manner and holds them in scorn. He finally finds out that it was Nimi who took it. He is filled with anger and starts chasing her. She tries to escape but her family locked door. “All the stories of brides trying to escape- now and then even an account of a husband sidling out Shameshameshameshame to the family” (169). Finally he sends her back to her family and she knows that family will be ashamed of her. Her uncle tells her:

You are your husband’s responsibility,” he said angrily. “Go back. Your father gave a dowry when you married- you got share and it is not for daughters to come claiming anything thereafter. If you have made your husband angry, go ask for forgiveness. (306)

Desai points out the position of women in India. This conflict demonstrates several problems and describes the cruel reality of women in India. Her duty is to behave in accordance with the deeply rooted traditions. These senseless traditions and position of women are degraded on lowest level.

Thus, Kiran Desai has contributed significantly to the literary world in general and to the Indian writing in English in particular, by investing her works with a multicultural perspective that widens and enlarges the frontiers of thought which is considered a very important literary characteristic by most critics and thinkers.

Kiran Desai has delineated in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* with the problem and plights of alienated, individuals caught in the crisis of changing society, revealing the varying mental states, psychic reverberations, inner motives and

existential pursuits of man. She excels particularly in highlighting the miserable position of highly sensitive and emotional women tortured by a humiliation, sense of neglect, of loneliness and of desperation. The following chapter deals with the issues of Dislocation and Identity crisis.

Chapter Three

Dislocation and Identity Crisis

The novel *The Inheritance of Loss* echoes several issues in which human life is entangled with dislocation, identity crisis, multiculturalism and social inequality. Kiran Desai presents to us an elegant and thoughtful picture of families, the losses that each member confronts alone, and the memories of the past which are more palatable. Sprawling across two continents the novel is set in India of 1980s and sketches the characters such as Jemubhai Patel, a former judge; Sai, his granddaughter; his Cook and his son Biju; Noni and Lola, his neighbours and Gyan, Sai's Nepalese maths tutor. These characters are set against the political turmoil of the Himalayan region where in the Gorkha National Liberation Front, a Nepalese independence movement takes a violent turn.

The novel *The Inheritance of Loss* deals with the theme of Dislocation and Identity Crisis where she tells about the present situations in which the principal characters find them rootless and lead a life of loneliness and solitude. It shows how people move out of India and migrate to other countries like England and America and how they are alienated in a strange land and how people in their own mother land feel isolated and suffer from loss of identity. In this novel Desai portrays that some characters are dislocated in one way or another and there are different types of displaced people. Some characters are experiencing the pain of exile in America while few persons are enjoying the pleasure of being immigrants in the subcontinent. Both Western and Eastern immigrants go through the constant psychological endeavor to construct a new identity in dislocated place whether in America or in India.

Dislocation is a situation in which something such as a system, process or way of life is greatly disturbed or prevented from continuing as normal. Identity refers to the way in which the character is characterized or the personality of a person is perceived by the society. Identity crisis is coined by the theorist Erikson and believed that it was one of the most important conflicts people face in development. According to Erikson, an identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself.

The novel *The Inheritance of Loss* brings the difference between the East and West through two parallel stories, one set in Kalimpong and the other in New York. The rise of the Gorkha movement is an important aspect in the novel that reveals the national identity and belonging. The Gorkha movement affects the lives of all the characters and Desai says about the movement:

In Kalimpong, high in the northern Himalayas where they lived- the retired judge and his cook, Sai, and Mutt- there was a report of new dissatisfaction in the hill, gathering insurgency, men and guns. It was the Indian-Nepalese this time, fed up with being treated like the minority in a place where they were the majority. They wanted their own country, or at least their own state, in which to manage their own affairs. (9)

Kalimpong in the Eastern Himalaya is home to Sai, an orphaned teenager who lives with her grandfather Jemubhai Patel, a retired judge; their poor cook whose son Biju is in New York and Mutt, the judge's pet dog and his sole source of joy. Their house is broken by young rebels from the GNLFF an actual political party seeking to empower West Bengal's ethnic Nepalis to lead a separatist uprising. The rebels threaten and humiliate the family and steal the judge's rusty rifles and meager liquor

supply. The Front also draws in Gyan, Sai's maths tutor and lover who is frustrated by his future as a marginalized Nepali in India and he betrays Sai because of her Westernized ways. Kalimpong is in chaos with bands of insurgents invade the town and the police respond by deporting foreigners, confiscating books and detaining and torturing the innocent. Kiran Desai unravels the personal and political strands that have brought the characters to their present life in Kalimpong. She beautifully delineates how little failures are passed down from generation to generation and how each character's past affect their present circumstances and what losses they have inherited.

One of the main themes in the novel is the dislocation and identity crisis that all the characters undergo in the course of their lives. Every character in the novel is unhappy in the environment and thus their displacement creates problems of assimilation, a sense of alienation and crisis of identity. Each character in the novel is different and the environment they all live are hostile to them and hence their identity is troubled. Ashish Nandy in his famous essay says that:

. . . nationalism does not come free in a society like ours. Firstly it comes bundled with official concepts of state, ethnicity, territoriality, security and citizenship. Once such a package captures public imagination, it is bound to trigger in the long run, in a society as diverse as ours, various forms of 'subnationalism' [...] the idea of the nation in the 'official' theory of nationhood can be made available in a purer form to culturally more homogenous communities such as the Sikhs, the Kashmiri Muslims, the Gorkhas and the Tamils. As a result, one the ideology of nationalism is internalized, no psychological barrier is left standing against the concepts of

new nation-states that would be theoretically even purer, homogenous national units- in terms of religion, language and culture. (3)

Many of the characters in the novel have lost their location and identity such as the Judge Jemubhai Patel, Sai, Gyan, The Cook, Biju, Lola and Noni, Father Booty and Uncle Potty. The sense of displacement is caused by cultural connections with the host land and this leads to the loss of one's identity.

The main character, judge Jemubhai experiences dislocation twice in his life. In the first time the judge experiences the dislocation when his parents decide to send him to England and so he becomes completely isolated. His race begins to matter a lot and there are times when "he felt barely human at all and leaps when touched on the arm as if from an unbearable intimacy" (40). Jemubhai Patel is unable to find a house for several days in England as no one is willing to rent a house for him as he is racially inferior. On his return to India, he begins to despise his wife. He creates a huge uproar when his powder puff goes missing. In England he learns the way of the British and begins to believe in the supremacy of British society.

Homi Bhabha points out that the influence of a different culture often customs tension between the desire of holding on to one's identity and also the demand for a change in identity. Jemubhai used to have a tea every afternoon, speak English with a British accent, and use the powder puff in an attempt to hide his real skin colour. In spite of all his attempts to fit into British society, he remains as an outsider. He suffers from a double isolation and this causes an identity crisis for the judge. So he still believes in the superiority of the West.

Sai and Gyan also suffers from dislocation and identity crisis because after the death of Sai's parents she comes to Kalimpong to stay with her grandfather Jemubhai,

thrusting her from her convent school environment to a lonely life in her grandfather's mansion, Cho Oyu. Her meeting with Gyan, the Nepali tutor brings a change in her life. Culturally they are different and this causes the differences of opinion which creates a rift in their relationship. Gyan is aware of their differences when he first eats with Sai. He eats with his hands while she uses fork. Later when he dines at the judge's house, his awkwardness with the fork and knife makes him very conscious and uncomfortable. He begins to feel ashamed about it and this leads to a sense of inferiority and he says that, "I am not interested in Christmas! He shouted "Why do you celebrate Christmas? You're Hindus and you don't celebrate Id or Guru Nanak's birthday or even adaurga Puja or Dussehra or Tibetan New Year" (163).

Gyan finds Sai and the judge's way superficial and he prefers to retreat to his own culture. He stands in the market watching a procession of the Gorkha movement pass by, "Gyan had a feeling of history being wrought" (157). He joins in the procession by shouting slogans as they move ahead and begins to feel a sense of oneness by quoting, "he was pulled back into the making of history" (157). Among his own kind of people he seems to find a sense of identification by mocking on the judge's western lifestyle.

The Cook has no identity because he is a person from a lower class who follows Indian tradition. He is a migrant worker from Uttar Pradesh and has been living for the survival at the judge's house and does household chores. The cook is proud of his son Biju who is in New York and states that,

The cook had thought of ham ejected from a can and fried in thick ruddy slices, of tuna fish soufflé, khari biscuit pie, and was sure that since his son

was cooking English food, he had a higher position than if he were cooking Indian. (17)

The protagonist Biju confronts a struggle to achieve a stable identity but at the same time faces so many cultural conflicts. His situation is more pathetic and he is an illegal immigrant unlike the judge. In the United States, Biju becomes aware of the ugly, disorderly state of the West. His life is miserable, moving from one restaurant to another living with many appalling conditions. He lives in poverty where he has to sleep in shifts, or on the floor of the hotel where he works, and serve beef which he detests. Biju finds that Indian men in New York restaurants order beef, something that he does not like “One should not give up one’s religion, the principles of one’s parents and their parents before them. You had to live according to something” (136). His reaction towards the west becomes more forceful when he later understands that he along with many other illegal immigrants like him in the restaurant is actually exploited. When he applies for his visa at the U.S embassy, he is with the group of Indians struggling to reach the counter window. He tries hard to impress the U.S officials and tell them that he is civilized:

He dusted himself off, presenting himself with the exquisite manners of cat. I’m civilized, sir ready for the U.S., I’m civilized, man. Biju noticed that his eyes, so alive to the foreigners, looked back at his own countrymen and women, immediately glazed over, and went dead. (183)

For Biju life in New York is not a cake walk as he struggles immensely and hops from one menial job to the other in the city. He lives in poverty where he has to sleep in shifts or on the floor of the hotel where he works and has to serve the beef which he detests. Like his friend Saeed, Biju is willing to undergo any torment. He is

fighting for his own identity as he adapts to his life in New York. He finds that life in America is not lavish as he expected and he has left the servant's life in one country just to take a similar one in another country. He also realizes that poverty in America is less severe than in India. As he is an illegal immigrant he is forced to work for very low wages and experience extreme servitude to his employers. He makes a pathetic appeal to his current employer; Harish Harry to sponsor him a Green Card. Biju says that,

Without us living like pigs, what business you have? This is how you make money, paying us nothing because of you know we can't do anything, making us work day and night because we are illegal. Why don't you sponsor us for our green cards? (188)

Biju is desperate for a green card and he is crying for India. America has created a profound chasm in him. When Biju make telephone calls to his father in India, his imagination recreates the atmosphere of a Kalimpong where his father resides:

He could feel the pulse of the forest, smell the humid air, the green black lushness; he could imagine all its different textures, the plumage of banana, the stark spear of the cactus, the delicate gestures of ferns. (230)

Biju feels fed up and left alone in a system that he knows nothing and decides to return to his homeland with his meager savings. When he reaches India, he thinks that he is safe, breathes a sigh of relief and feels at home,

Biju stepped out of the airport into the Calcutta night, warm, mammalian. His feet sank into dust winnowed of softness at his feet, and he felt an unbearable

feeling, sad and tender, old and sweet like the memory of falling asleep, a baby on his mother's lap. (300)

It is pathetic to see Biju being robbed of his meager savings as well as his American clothes. Biju has failed to absorb positive from his life in America. He goes to America with high hopes of returning with abundant wealth but his new life now "Without his baggage, without his savings, worst of all, without his pride. Back from America with far less than he'd ever had" (317).

The next two characters who suffers from identity crisis are Lola and Noni who are two Anglophile sisters who grow broccoli with seeds got from England, listen to the BBC and read nineteenth century British novels. Lola is proud that her daughter is an anchor at BBC and she asks her not to come back to India. As Lola and Noni are from upper class residents of Kalimpong, they see the regions disintegration to be the result of illegal immigration. She blames on the Nepali who had been brought to work on the tea plantations and in the British army. There is a parallel drawn between the stories of Nepali immigrants in India and Indian immigrant in the states. As Bhabha demonstrates that the nation will lack unity and homogeneity and that is doomed to be unstable. In the novel Lola says that,

This state-making, Lola continued, biggest mistake that fool Nehru made. Under his rules any group of idiots can stand up demanding a new state and get it, too. How many new ones keep appearing? From fifteen we went to sixteen, sixteen to seventeen, seventeen to twenty-two . . . (128)

Like Biju, there are other characters in this novel that goes through this kind of estrangement. They are Uncle Potty and Father Booty. Uncle Potty belongs to the English Upper class and he bought his land from the judge ago, and now spends his

day drinking. Father Booty is from Swiss national who has been living at the foot of Kanchenjunga about forty five years with a desire to lead a peaceful life in the rest of his life. He opens a Swiss style diary and produces cheese, curd and chocolate cigars for the entire locality. Like other characters, the Gorkha movement affects his life too. Having lived in India for forty five years it is suddenly discovered that he does not have valid residence permit and hence he is an illegal immigrant. “He knew he was a foreigner but had lost the notion that he was anything but an Indian foreigner . . .” (142). Father Booty loses his faith and discovers himself as an alien for the first time in his life in a foreign land. It is the identity crisis moment in Father Booty’s life when his ideology has started to change. He becomes nostalgic and strongly connected to his homeland.

The characters in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* such as Jemubhai Patel, PannaLal (The Cook), Lola, Noni, Father Booty and Uncle Potty reflect the pain of transition and the pain of younger generation such as Sai, Biju, Gyan, Harish Harry and Saeed. Saeed belong to different cultural backgrounds. Almost all the characters in the novel search for identity and suffer a lot with cultural upheavels. Jemubhai Patel has almost lost everything and his identity. Sai encounters a dilemma regarding her identity. She speaks English and celebrates Christmas while she is a Hindu girl who is completely unaware of her religion. Biju suffers the embittered feelings of loss during his stay at America where he loses his dream of success and happiness in life and finally the Cook has lost his love with his native culture as he feels regret for not being able to serve a white man like his father.

The characters in the novel long for home and love and also there are moments of tenderness and pleasure in their lives. Almost all the characters in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* contribute towards the issues of identity in a postcolonial and

multicultural society. The Gorkha movement brings rapid changes in their life. Tourism is hit and business is also bad. There is no water supply, no electricity and no cooking gas. People are afraid to leave their homes and often innocent people are arrested and tortured on flimsy grounds. Lola and Noni are discriminated against and lose most of their property to the movement, who see their estate as a free land. When Lola visits the head of the organization for the Kalimpong area, she is discriminated against because of her ethnicity and class. For the first time in her life she is able to recognize the poor and understand their difficult situation:

The sisters had never paid much attention for the simple reason that they didn't have to. It was natural they would incite envy, they supposed, and the laws of probability favoured their slipping through life without anything more than muttered comments. (241)

In the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, Desai conveys the message that life is full of sufferings and problems and one should always learn from their mistakes. One is often attracted by the material fortune and comforts that the west seems to offer. But in spite of the backwardness, poverty and illiteracy in one's own land, one can probably derive a sense of belonging and identity in one's own land only. Uprooting from one's own land and re-routing in an alien land is a painful process. Thus Desai successfully described the dilemmas faced by her characters in their longing to find a green pasture in a foreign land. The next chapter deals with narrative technique and stylistic devices which are used in the novel.

Chapter Four

Narrative Technique and Stylistic Devices

For the Indian English novelists, a novel is a means of expression borne of their understanding of man, nature and God. Their expression becomes appropriate through language, form and technique. To make the novel a working model of life and portrayal of real life the novelist employs narrative techniques and some stylistic devices. *The Inheritance of Loss* is presented from the third person's point of view. Traditional literary forms and style along with traces of Indian oral culture is spoken by the different classes of people are found in the novel. Donna Seaman in the Booklist published in Chicago by the American Library Association reviewed the novel as follows, "Desai imaginatively dramatizes the wonders and tragedies of Himalayan life and by extension, the fragility of peace and elusiveness of justice, albeit with her own powerful blend of tenderness and wit" (Seaman 26).

There is always a comparison between the past and the present in the novel. The description of nature is amazing. The novel opens with the colours of dusk at Kanchenjunga:

All day, the colours had been those of dusk, mist moving like a water creature across the great flanks of mountains possessed of ocean shadows and depths. Briefly visible above the vapor, Kachenjunga was a far peak whittled out of ice, gathering the last of the light, a plume of snow blown high of the storms at its summit. (1)

Comic situations have also been used in between the serious themes of the story. The human emotions are wrapped in words which create a whole hearted impression on the readers. The author has described the past and present life of the

characters in the story in such a manner that towards the end of the story a sense of relating to them prevails. The use of local language has also given the novel a definite edge. The time and place have a huge role in the scheme of things.

The concern with the technique has been slow to evolve in the Indian English fiction. In the thirties when the Indian English fiction attained its maturity, the novelists started employing new experiments in the techniques of novels by assimilating the innovations of modern novelists and adapting them to suit the treatment of Indian tradition and ethos. In the post-independent period the novelists were attracted to new techniques in plotting, narration and characterization. Kiran Desai has been recognized for her skill in handling the modern fictional techniques such as flashbacks and stream of consciousness. Indian writing in English has a very few writers dealing with the stream of consciousness technique. As Swain says, “Very rarely does an Indian writer in English succeed in showing human life in all its wide variety and fluctuating mood manifesting themselves in myriad forms through the ebb and flow of the protagonist’s consciousness” (251).

The stream of consciousness is a narrative device used in literature to depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind. For dealing with the past, Desai has used this technique of flashback or stream of consciousness. Employing Flashback and stream of consciousness technique, the novelist makes Biju introspect on his childhood and thinks of his home as sweet home.

Lying on his basement that night he thinks of his village where he has lived with his grandmother on the money of his father sent each month. When he had visited his father in Kalimpong, they had sat outside in the evenings and his father had reminisced. How peaceful our village is. They hadn’t noticed

Sai, then aged thirteen, staring from her bedroom window jealous of the cook's love for his son. (102)

This we see particularly with the character of Jemubhai Patel who is triggered by a present situation which is lost in the past, his life moves in front of him, right from his childhood, education, journey to England and back, and his service as a magistrate. Sometimes the judge himself reveals his past, at times the cook is shown to narrate the life of judge and his wife. For example, when his orphaned granddaughter arrives at Cho Oyu, he finds himself upset and disturbed. This makes the past incidents move in front of his eyes.

The novelist makes use of the stream of consciousness technique while presenting the cook's memories of the past. He recollects sending Biju on a cruise ship four years ago when a recruiting agent came to Kalimpong seeking applications for waiters, vegetable choppers, toilet cleaners etc. With the promise to get legal employment in the USA, the interview is held at Sinclair's Hotel. The judge has objected to the plan as he expects Biju to work in the cook's place when he retires.

Biju's interview is successful and he is summoned to Kathmandu for a week's training. But when he reaches there, he finds that it is a cheating game. Next he tries directly to get a tourist visa from the American embassy. He has taken a fake bank guarantee which his father has got from a corrupt state bank clerk gifting two bottles of black label. Despite all the lies, Biju has got the visa and sends the telegram to his father calling himself, "The luckiest boy in the whole wide world" (187). But that is the idle make-believe world in which the old cook lives hoping for greener days ahead, reminiscing the past.

Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* as a modern masterpiece is written in a highly original style and her stylistic craftsmanship leaves a long lasting impression on the minds of the reader. Her writing technique and style sustains the long stream of consciousness as a current of water. Desai's observation of the daily life and eccentricities of the characters are laced with wit that make readers chuckle. She admirably captures the sights, smells and sounds of the places inhabited by her characters. And with the insightful reflections she makes the reader pause and think. All her assorted characters experience impotence and humiliation in the aftermath of colonial rule caught up in the events over which they have no control. She seems to convey that globalization and forces of modernity have not proved a blessing for all, especially downtrodden people, broken people because of so much greed and hypocrisy. Cities are full of migrants wanting to escape.

Desai's writing is languid and beautiful with delightful turns of phrase. Even the forests of Kalimpong with their mists and darkness come alive in her writing. In the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* Desai made some engrossing reading with its rich and poetic language. Its wide range of characters entwined neatly in a complex plot line, but narrated with the ease and dexterity of a master writer. Her tone is mildly humorous and her method is meticulous. Desai paints effective word pictures without going into elaborate descriptions.

The unique style of Desai has made her stand apart from her contemporary writers. She has employed new techniques in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* that makes the novel a bit different. She has experimented freely with language and combined fact and fiction. The use of sentence construction, experiment in arrangement of words and use of linguistic devices are reflected in the novel. Good plays with words and phrases are seen in the novel. Her novel seems to be filled with

charming phrases, elegant sentences, felicitous expression, throbbing sentiments and incredible kindness. Using words with the aid of a perfect device, she has been successful in rendering her emotions and feelings. She has used some words from regional languages. To introduce some fun and comedy she has shown the cook imitating English language. It has accent and pronunciation that creates a funny atmosphere in the novel. For example, “Bad tea,” was how it sounded. “Baaadtee. Baaadtee” (61).

The use of language is also ascertained in depth. Anecdotes and dialogues are used in the novel. For example, “Sai, pulling open her underwear drawer, found a bright pink jelly scalloping the layers of dreary cotton” (106). It is an elegant and haunting novel presenting a wonderful picture of the human values and emotions. One aspect of the novel is that in the midst of the changing situations, there are some people who change for the better, while find it really difficult to change.

Desai has made the use of code switching throughout the novel. The Indian words uttered by characters like the cook and the Biju depict their illiteracy towards English language, making the novel more Indian or more provincial. Some examples of code switching are: “Cook is shocked to know that all these years Sai was not in a foreign country but in Dehra Dun. “Dehra Dun!” Devasted, “Kamaalhai,” said the cook” (24). Some more Indian words are used in the novel are “No Pertastas, Tikka masala” (41). Not only Indian characters of Desai are made to use Indian words but living abroad also uses Indian words such as “Namaste, Kusum Auntie, aayiye, baethiya, Khayiye!” (50).

To enhance the feelings or the emotions, Desai has used reduplication mostly in the novel such as, “Thump Thump Wiggle Waggle (15), honky tonk (106), and

Dum Dum” (131). Desai’s skill resides in selection of words, even the every sounds are reproduced to recreate the necessary effect, for example; the rustling of the wind and the grass, the twittering of birds, the croaking of the frogs, the whistling of the owl and so on. Kiran Desai’s Indian origin is revealed when the characters speak out exclamation from Hindi vernaculars such as, “ArreChaloChalo” (147) and “Arre, Biju... to sunaoKahani,” She always said, “batao what’s the story?” (146). Desai also depicts a unique mixture of the comic and sadness where the readers derive pleasure even in the chaotic surrounding situations. Desai also uses a charming style, the use of multiple question marks, multiple exclamatory marks, and use of Italics, periphrasis, insertions of simile, and analogy in all the descriptions with ease that makes her novel amazing and unique. In her novel she also uses the wide and generous uses of capital letters. For instance, we can find it in the communication between the Cook and his son Biju over the telephone:

ARE YOU ALRIGHT? BIJU SHRIEKED ON THE NEWYORK STREET.

DON’T WORRY ABOUT ME DON’T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING
HERE.

ARE THERE PROPER ARRANGEMENTS FOR EATING AT THE
HOTEL?

IS THE RESTAURANT GIVING YOU ACCOMODATION? (231)

There are ample uses of one word sentences, one phrase sentences, one phrase paragraphs or one word paragraphs in the novel. The selection of words is not much complicated instead they are very simple and wonderful to explain the complexities of the world. Her creativity in the paragraph construction is very rich.

Desai has used felicitous alliterations in the novel for example: “You had to live according to something. You had to find your dignity. The meat charred on the grill, the blood beaded on the surface, and then the blood also began to bubble and boil” (136), “Gorkhaland for Gorkhas” (214). Desai’s word game is also depicted in hybridization leading to new coinage such as “Harish-Harry, Gaurish-Garry, Dhansukh-Danny” (138). According to Madhu Kamara, he observes that “The prose is poetic which another attraction to the reading of the novel” (209). By applying these devices Desai enriches her language.

Desai has used irony as one of the devices to highlight the theme of the novel. Irony pervades the lives of all characters in the novel. Biju and his father make all attempts right and wrong to get American visa for Biju. The cook obtains a fake passport with the help of corrupt bank clerk. He enters America with a hope of bright future. The cook boasts of his son’s position in America to people in India. He is proud to announce that he is the father of a boy in America. That inflates his chaste. He is so confident of his son’s position in America that he recommends some boys for jobs in America.

Another significant example of irony in this novel is the life of the judge. His sojourn at Kalimpong is essentially meant to bring mental peace for the judge. But all he gets is irritation after the arrival of Sai. Gyan and Sai affair increases the frustration. Even though he is looked after by the cook, the entire atmosphere in the family lacks warmth. Irony of human life is the tireless striving that carries them to imperfection.

Regarding the setting in the novel, *The Inheritance of Loss* is set in Kalimpong, a small town very close to the Western part of the Darjeeling hills. The

plot moves between India and America. The novel is divided into fifty three short chapters. These chapters are further divided into subsections. We can say that this novel has three physical locations, they are Himalayan foots in north Eastern part of India, American restaurants and the last is Gorkha land.

The Inheritance of Loss is located in the North Eastern part of the Himalayas around the year in 1986. The novel is about a seventeen year old girl Sai in Kalimpong. She stays in a small house called Ho Oyu along with her granddaughter, a left over product of the Indian civil service. Sai is very scared of her conservative grandfather. A cook who stays in this house accompanies her in her loneliness.

The story moves from Kalimpong to the frontiers of Europe in the early part of 1940 where the judge has lived previously. Jemubhai Patel opts for this religion because he thinks that this place will provide much needed solitude to him. He has been a survivor during the rule of the British Empire in India. He has been torn between two selves after Indian independence. The British government has not paid his past services and he does not have much regards for newly formed Indian government and its place. In order to escape the company of other people, he has selected to stay in mountain valleys. But he has failed to realize that peace is an attribute of mind and not of the body.

American restaurants form the second location of the novel. Cook's son Biju sneaks his way to America on a fake passport but has to hide himself from the bright American sun. There are two observations that must be quoted here the first is that he has worked with Indian restaurants in the USA, which means that he cannot become American, in spite of his being in America and secondly he cannot enjoy the richness of American life, he is imprisoned in the ground floor of the big building.

Gorkha Liberation Movement that had spread in North-East portion of India makes the third setting of the novel. Gyan's character is formed by his love for Sai and his love for Gorkha land. He has forsaken his delicate ties with the girl for strengthening his ties with the agitators. Jemubhai cannot accomplish peace in Kalimpong. Biju cannot survive in America. Gyan does not succeed in getting Gorkha land. These settings thus add to the final analysis of loss in their life.

Desai has used the symbols of idle insect to explain the condition of Biju in America. His hopes are devastated. His whole being is in danger of losing its identity. Saeed from Zanzibar has become an object of envy in the circle of Asian boys, not because he has got Green card but because he can apply for the Green card. Whether India or America, human beings cannot fulfill their dreams and that is what the novel is trying to say. Judge's only dream after retirement is to live peacefully. Cook's dream is to see his only son to become an American. Sai's dream rests on her lover Gyan. Biju's dream is to earn wealth. But nobody's dream is fulfilled in the end. This is the reason for the title of the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*.

Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* as a modern masterpiece is written in a highly original style and her stylistic craftsmanship which leaves a long lasting impression on the minds of the readers. With her second novel, Desai has secured her place in the list of great contemporary Indian authors. Thus Kiran Desai, by applying these devices she enriches her language and succeeds in creating her own mark by her experimental and innovative skill. She has omniscient point of view but her novel depicts many tools of post-modernism. She plays with language and mixes high and popular culture. She skillfully uses narrative and linguistic devices and achieves the fragmentation of narrative architecture and reconstruction of Standard English. The next chapter is a summation of all the previous chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

In the twentieth century, Women's writing was considered as a powerful medium of modernism and feminist statement. The last two decades have witnessed phenomenal success in portraying the theme of immigration and consequent alienation of the self. This was the thematic pre-occupation of Indo-Anglican novelists like Jhumpa Lahiri, Chitra Banerjee, Amitav Ghosh and Kiran Desai. They are chiefly concerned with cross-cultural and racist encounters between the characters on socio-cultural plane.

Kiran Desai is one of the most talented writers of her generation. She has created literary history by winning the prestigious Man Booker Prize in 2006 and National Book Critics Circle Fiction award for her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* which is a postcolonial novel that raises important issues related to colonial culture and inheritance in a powerful and persuasive way. The novel explains her journey and opportunities to see and identify various backgrounds closely as her early life demonstrates that she herself has been a part of multicultural society.

The novel is written in the third person point of view. All the characters often switch from their thoughts and go straight into dialogue. The story takes place in two places. The first place is in Kalimpong, a town near Darjeeling which is in the northeastern point of India which is bordered by Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan. There is much ethnic strife, which has existed for decades, if not centuries and was worsened when the British took control of India and redrew the borders to the discontent of the different ethnic people in the area.

The novel *The Inheritance of Loss* offers variety of themes in a different manner. The main theme is immigration. Biju, the son of the cook, is an illegal immigrant trying to find work in America for leading a luxurious life. But Biju loses his respect in America. He is working in a series of deadened jobs at small U.S. restaurants. Many critics have approached the theme of the novel differently and interpreted it in various ways.

The locale of the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is Kalimpong, a rural area located by the foot of Mount Kanchenjunga, full of beautiful natural landscapes in the North Eastern part of India and in the New York, the most advanced and developed city of America, where Biju has to undergo drudgery for livelihood, but he could not materialize his dreams of becoming a well-to-do man.

Biju, the son of the cook serves at the restaurants and keep searching for his better future from one place to another in the U.S.A. He can be happy when he can procure a green card. This problem of establishment, for better position in America makes us aware of the other side of America where well equipped and highly educated immigrant Indians are still living striving to get position of power. Kiran Desai has portrayed very elegantly, with her wide looking perspective, the character of Biju. He engages the notice at two levels. First, as the individual striving to stand on his service to fulfill his dream in restaurants, on the other hand to signify the type of people who are immigrant to America in the specific phase of time.

Biju has joined Harish-Harry restaurant, Gandhi Café because it is a Hindu establishment where Beef is not cooked. He refuses to give up his religion or compromise the principles of his ancestors. He sees the differences between a holy cow and an unholy cow and has decided to live within a narrow purity, even though

he knows that it may be difficult for him to survive and succeed in America with such kind of attitude. Harrish Harry is an enterprising Indian-American business man. Though he has named his restaurant 'Gandhi Cafe' capitalizing on the marketability of the Indian icon Gandhi, he is not at all Gandhian in his treatment with his employees. He exploits the Indians but cringes before the Americans. His name is indicative of a deep rift within himself.

Biju also begins to wonder why he is awful to the white man who does a great harm to the Indians. Like almost all people, Biju has inherited prejudices and beliefs about certain type of people from his parents and the area he has grown up in. However, racist beliefs have become more and more unacceptable and having a general respect of people of every race and ethnicity is something people should strive for. Biju is one of the only characters in the novel that questions the ideas he is taught and at least begins to let go some of his prejudices. Biju's encounter with foreign cultures is more positive than most of the other characters who encounter in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. Fortunately, after some years of struggling in New York City while desperately missing India and his father, Biju finally returns home to India losing all he has earned along the way.

The novel is filled with examples of how different types of people interact, mix and blend. Unfortunately, the line between cultures is not easily blurred. Some traditions and customs transcend separate cultures especially in today's globalized world, but prejudices and hatred based on race and class are often hard to eliminate.

Due to the rise of globalization and increase in education there has been a tremendous change in one's lifestyle. This also affects one's identity to a great deal. Harrish becomes Harry; Gaurish is called Garry and Dhanusuksh as Danny. Similarly

Harish's daughter rejecting the ancient Indian style of living by using nose, ring and felling more comfortable in western attire shows the hybridity in these people.

This novel reveals Kiran Desai's imaginative and creative power. It is written in lush and playful language. She often plays with words. It is unveiled through her use of language in this novel. It makes the readers laugh. For example:

What is a chunchun and what is a thunthun?"

Chun Chun is a tingling,

ThunThun is when there is a pain going on and off. (72)

In the Introductory chapter the researcher has put forth contents about the author Kiran Desai and her contribution to Indian fiction. It deals with the introduction of thesis, origin, growth of Indian Literature and their other characteristics. It records the contribution of Desai to the field of Diaporic Literature. It summarizes the author's life in a nutshell. It also puts forth the reason which inspired Desai to write *The Inheritance of Loss*.

The second chapter "Hybridity and Multicultural conflicts" discusses about the multicultural conflicts which each character when they come in contact with a foreign culture. Different people visit different countries to settle and achieve success in their life. The cultural invasion gives the suspicion and unhealthy atmosphere which is injurious to humanity. The immigrants are always in confusion how to adjust with the new culture. Even globalization gives rise to a new kind of cultural crisis. So the natives are always suspicious about the immigrants and thus cultural crisis creates several problems.

In the third chapter titled “Dislocation and Identity Crisis” discusses about the existence of the principal characters who find themselves rootless and lead a life of loneliness and solitude. It discusses that how people move out of India and migrate to other countries like England and America and how they are alienated in a strange land. Desai portrays how some characters are dislocated in one way or another. Some characters like Jemubhai Patel, cook, Lola, Noni, Father Booty reflect the pain of transition and the younger generation such as Sai, Biju, Gyan search for identity and suffer a lot with cultural upheaval as they long for home and love. Thus Desai conveys the message that life is full of sufferings and problems and one should always learn from their mistakes. So she concludes by stating that uprooting from one’s land and re-routing in an alien land is a painful process.

The fourth chapter deals with the “Narrative Techniques and Stylistic devices” which shows Desai’s skilful use of Stream of Consciousness and Flashback technique in the novel to deal with the past. It also depicts the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind. Desai makes use of this technique to present the cook’s memories of the past. She also uses some original stylistic devices that leave a long lasting impression on the minds of the readers. Her writing technique and style sustains the stream of consciousness as a current of water. Desai’s observation of the daily life and eccentricities of the characters are laced with the wit that makes the readers chuckle. Her writing is languid and beautiful with delightful turns of phrase. In this novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, Desai made some engrossing reading with its rich and poetic language that is entwined neatly. She has also used some literary devices such as metaphor, simile, irony, play with words and some phrases that bring beauty to the language. Using words with the aid of a perfect device, she has been successful in rendering her emotions and feelings. Thus Desai, by applying these

devices in her novel enriches her language and succeeds in creating her own mark by her experimental and innovative skill.

Desai, in the first half of the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, has not given clearly and exactly at what direction things are moving. The first half of the novel exhibits a sense of drift. But in the second half of the novel, Biju is left forgotten as the events focus on the disintegration of Gorkha and into anarchy. The Westernized Indians find themselves threatened by the insurgents and unable to trust the loyalties of the police, neighbours and close confidants. This descent is quite horrifying and balanced. The personal detail with the general destruction to perfection, the pace picked up plot, characterization and detail all seem to sharpen into focus. The readers are left wondering, as to why we have invested so much emotion to Biju. The ending is sudden and quite satisfactory that each character deals in their unique way. All of them are consumed with guilt for the way they have lived their lives and decide to change their existing position.

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Representation of Reality through Dreams: A Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*

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MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Land of Dreams	12
Three	Identity Crisis	23
Four	Feminine Mysticism	34
Five	Summation	47
	Work cited	53

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Representation of Reality through Dreams: A Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*** a novel submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Rubina J. during the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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APRIL 2021

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PREFACE

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award winning Indo-American novelist, poet and teacher of writing. Her works have been published in over 50 magazines, including the Atlantic Monthly and the New Yorker. The novel *Queen of Dreams* portrays American reality, American Dream, fears and anxieties that the Americans are vulnerable, and the immigrant Indians response to the emptiness and loneliness that haunt the inhabitants of this modern wasteland.

The first chapter **Introduction** presents Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's contribution to diasporic literature and review of literature.

The second chapter **Land of Dreams** deals with the difficulties faced by the second generation immigrants and their survival in the diasporic land.

The third chapter **Identity Crisis** throws lights on how protagonist Rakhi fulfill her search for identity.

The fourth chapter **Feminine Mysticism** discusses the twin theories of mysticism and magical realism and also how Rakhi saves her relationship.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the four chapters, and presents the researcher's findings. It also gives an outlook for future research scholars to work on other aspects of Divakaruni's works.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Indian Writing in English refers to literature written in English by Indian authors who have an Indian language as their native tongue. It also includes the body of work in English by Indian Diaspora who are settled in different countries like UK, Canada, USA, Germany, Australia and West Indies. It has a long history of growth and development as it involves several historical events and distinguished personalities. The origin of Indian literature in English is traced back to the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a Bengali social reformer and a master of English prose pioneered the development of Indian Literature in English.

Because of the ongoing change, confluence of culture and intersection of identities, a new theory emerged in academic field and literature in the form of diaspora studies including interdisciplinary approach. The deep rooted mixed feelings, sense of belonging coupled with loss, a desire to conform the pattern of living and also a penchant to contribute to the progress of the home land of the people living in diaspora found an expression in a new academic field known as the diaspora studies.

The term ‘diaspora’ has been used to describe recent migrants from a particular origin. It has been increasingly used to refer to the

ethnic or minority groups in destination countries, even if the group has been within the country for generations. The nature of dispersal is complex, with various factors and compulsions influencing migration, such as large scale recruitment and individual agency. It involves a wide variety of circumstances. Shaped by forced exile, collective trauma, labour recruitment or other processes, diasporas are not simple or one way. They are also about those who are unable to choose or move because of global capitalism. It is the choice of the diasporians whether to stay in homeland or abroad by force. They are motivated by transformations in political economies and growing inequalities in region. They are inspired by adventure and motivated by a variety of these factors, Diaspora is understood through someone or some group's movement, a consciousness of dispersal. The diaspora has become metaphorical trying to seek new meanings. Diaspora studies capture the apprehensions, anxiety and concerns of the new people thereby trying to analyse the depth of dilemma and problem of predicament. The problematic puzzled affairs of the mind, the enchanted and captivated generational differences came to the fore reflecting the entire system of growth and realisation.

Diaspora is a complex social formation shaped by political imaginary and defined by the materialities of national borders and economies. The term diaspora is evoked as an umbrella or catch-all term, an analytical category. Recently, more scholarly attention has been paid to complicate the terms to loosen the stable connection between

diasporic communities and places of origin. With radical changes in the conditions of migration under neoliberal globalization, there is also a recognition of the transnational politics and cultural contradiction that frame diasporic lives. These experiences of the border crossing and relocations raise questions that interrupt assumptions about nationality, citizenship and belonging.

Uma Parameswaran in her book *Trishanku and Other Writings: Current Perspectives in Indian English Literature* has discussed diaspora consciousness and observes:

The first nostalgia for the homeland, left behind mingled with fear in strange land. The second is a phase in which one is so busy in adjusting to the new environment that there is little creative output. The third phase is shaping of diaspora existence by involving themselves in ethno cultural issues. The fourth is when they have arrived and started participating in the larger world of politics and national issues. (108)

Diaspora literature explores the basic question of identity, home, memory, space, nation, belongingness, assimilation, acculturation and transmutation. The feelings of confusion, mystification, uncertainty, and perplexity are the central objects of study and subjects of writings. It reflects an awareness of being different from majority mainly because of one's own perception and because of the outside world.

Indian diaspora is the largest within the Asian diaspora as the Indian community scattered around the world is over twenty five million. It is considered to be the second largest diaspora community in the world. In the last decade of the twentieth century the Indian diaspora has increasingly begun to acquire a distinct global identity. With historic settlements around the world and successive migrations in the last two centuries to North America, Europe, Africa and the Middle East, the Indian diaspora reflects a growing self-consciousness that has been further strengthened by the developments of new communication technologies and rapid globalization. A number of diasporic writers like Salman Rushdie, have dealt with the issue of diasporic identity in their works. Diasporic women writers also deal with this important issue which is different from that of their male counterparts.

Women writers, in India and the Indian diaspora are moving forward with the strong and sure strides matching with the pace of the world. In 1960s, the description of women characters in novels that undertake a remarkable change in Indian fiction. Thus with the advent of feminism, women have worked hard to achieve their identity. Writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Meena Alexander, Shoban Bantwal, Kiran Desai, Chitra Banerjee and several others have combined to enrich the Indian diasporic literature. At present, most of them have been heavily influenced by various literary movements around the world such as symbolism, unrealism, existentialism, confessional poetry, modernism, post modernism in non-native writing.

Anita Desai is a remarkable novelist who has experimented with the diverse themes like rootlessness, alienation, suffering, material disharmony, devoted and interpersonal relationships. Her protagonists are intelligent and sensible but in an attempt to manage home and children and attain emotional fulfillment, they experience to emotional crisis. Her early novels focus on the lives of women overwhelmed with troubles in the male dominated society. Her novel *Cry the Peacock* (1963) represents the laboured and suppressed emotions of a neglected wife.

Kiran Desai is one of the most celebrated novelists in India. Her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* won the Man Booker Prize in 2006. It was also awarded the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award. Though she is a citizen of India, Desai is the permanent resident of United States. The art of writing comes naturally to Desai being the daughter of the noted writer Anita Desai. Her first novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* published in 1998 has received many praises from distinguished writers like Salman Rushdie. Her first book *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* won the Betty Task Award, a prize awarded by the society of authors for new novels by citizens under the age of thirty five of the Common Wealth Nations.

Divakaruni with her passion and response has instructed the horizon of Indian fiction with the possibilities of establishing new dimensions of narrative phrase. Born in India 1956, she is a prominent writer and poet who currently lives in Houston, Texas. Her writing is

nourished by her own experiences as an immigrant and a woman between culture and traditions on one hand and the new found freedom on the other hand. As a writer, she has been invited to judge notable competitions such as the National Book Award and Pen Faulkner Award. She is a regular guest of literary festivals and conferences mostly in the United States and in her home country.

Divakaruni has received many honors and awards. In 1995 she received The American Book Award and PEN Award for the short story collection *Arranged Marriage*. In 2009, she was given the Cultural Jewel Award from the Indian Culture Center, Houston followed by Light of India Jury's Award for Journalism and Literature in 2011. She was awarded the Premio Scanno Award for Literature, Italy in 2015. She has also won awards like the Hackney Literary Award, Barbara Deming Memorial Award, Editor's Choice Award, Gerbode Foundation Award, Pen Syndicated Fiction Awards, Bay Area Book Reviewers Award and American Book Award. She has also won many prizes like Paterson poetry Prize, Pushcart Prize and Allen Ginsberg Poetry Prize.

Divakaruni is a dominant voice of Indian origin that influenced the field of diaspora literature by expressing the colours of immigrant experiences and has secured a credible place in the genre of South Asian Diaspora literature. Both of her works, fiction as well as poetry state that diaspora is not merely scattering, but a model of consciousness that encompasses various conflicting characteristics. She belongs to the first generation of Indian immigrants with all its standards. In Divakaruni's

writings, the diaspora with its shifting boundaries and encounters between different cultures is an important focus. She locates her texts at the troubled intersection of female subjectivity and national identities. She focuses upon emotional protagonists who lack a stable sense of personal and cultural identity and are victimized by racism, sexism and other forms of social oppression. Although she captures different aspects of the cultural encounter, the ways in which identities are ordered from common source in her writings.

The most important feature of her literary creativity is her portrayal of gender connected with smart approach. The feminist themes of man-woman relationship in marriage with a cultural conflict, female bonding, migration of elder generation women in diaspora, construction of selfhood and identity and female resistance against the supportive control and marginalisation find expression in her fiction. All her women characters belong especially to Calcutta because there are women of all classes from upper to lower working class and majority belongs to Hindu religion. Most of the diasporic women characters are educated women with career and Divakaruni's personal experience of migrating for higher education and career is reflected in them.

The theme of capturing the Indian immigrant experiences in the United States filled each of her novels and short stories. Her main focus is on women characters, their struggle for identity, their bitter experiences and their final emergence as self confident individuals, free from the chains established by relationship. One of the key problems that

a Diaspora community faces is the difficulty regard to identity. On speaking about her gender portrayals, K.S.Dhanam writes:

Divakaruni's books are directed mainly to women of all races and faiths who share a common female experience. All her heroines must find themselves within the contrasting boundaries of their cultures and religions. She also contrasts the lives and perceptions of the first generation immigrants with that of their children born and raised in foreign land. And inevitably it includes the Indian American experience of grappling with two identities. She has her finger accurately on the diasporic pulse, fusing eastern values with western ethos. Her writings course with her identification is with a brave new world forging to life. Her sensitivity to contemporary voices, today's issues are threaded through with an ongoing search for identity beyond anthropology, beyond sociology and academia. (62)

Divakaruni's short stories and poems have been featured in magazines such as The Atlantic Monthly and The New Yorker including fifty anthologies. They were translated into twenty languages which include Dutch, Hebrew and Japanese. Most of her work is partially autobiographical and based on the lives of the Indian immigrants. Her first works were books of poetry, *Dark like the River* (1987), *The Reason for Nasturtiums* (1990) and *Black Candle* (1991).

India is a land of culture and people had a strong belief in superstitions. Preserving the culture is the prestige for all countries. Her novels are evidences to prove it. Her novels portray the possibility for establishing a double sided identity. Her works are largely set in India and the United States and it often focuses on the experience of South Asian immigrants. She writes for children as well as adults and has published novels in multiple genres including realistic fiction, historical fiction, magical realism, myth and fantasy.

Divakaruni's major works include *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of my Heart* (1999), *The Unknown Errors of our Lives* (2001), *The Vine Desire* (2002), *Queen of Dreams* (2004), *The Palace of Illusion* (2008), *One Amazing Thing* (2010), *Oleander Girl* (2013), *Leaving Yuba City* (1999) is unique because it includes a series of poems based on and inspired by various art forms, including paintings, photographs and specific Indian films. With these poems, Divakaruni once again shows how boundaries can be destroyed.

In *The Mistress of Spices*, Tilo is a shopkeeper born in India who helps the customers to satisfy their needs and desires with the mystical properties of spices. Her life changes when she falls for an American man Raven, whom the book strongly implies is a Native American. She chooses to ignore the rules of her training in her search for romance and her decision to seek out customers outside her shop, which result in the spices inflicting punishment on her and those she cares about. To save Raven from being another victim of spices powerful magic, she decides

to leave him after the night they were united in love. Afterwards she accepts the punishment for disregarding the rules of her training which results in the store being destroyed in an earthquake. At last, Tilo and Raven are reunited and decide to help rebuild the city.

In 1976, at the age of 19, Divakaruni immigrated to the United States. She continued her education in the United States by earning Master's degree in English from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio and a PhD from the University of California at Berkeley. Divakaruni's leadership and her experience as a cofounder and a former President of Maitri, a helpline founded in 1991 to deal with the domestic abuse faced by the South Asian women, injustice and cruelty suffered by these women finds expression in her very first collection of short stories *Arranged Marriage*.

The novel *One Amazing Thing* connects a direct link with a heartbreaking incident in *Mistress of Spices*, as a group of strangers hit by an earthquake confine to a common place to interrogate who they are and their expectations from life. With no character charted out to lead, Divakaruni brings them all on an equal platform, a new model with horizontal connection, an interconnection overpowering the vertical hierarchy. This wells up from the dangerous attitude of the writer to recognize other people's suffering and closely guard secrets as equally important.

In the novel *Queen of Dreams*, Divakaruni spins a fresh, attractive story of transformation as lyrical as it is dramatic. Rakhi, a young artist and her divorced mother are living in Berkeley, California is struggling to keep her foot with her family and with a world in disturbing growth. Her mother is a dream teller, born with the ability to share and interpret the dreams of others, to foresee and guide them through their fates. This gift of vision fascinates Rakhi but also isolates her from her mother's past in India and the dream world she inhabits, and she longs for something to bring them closer. Caught below the burden of her own painful secret, Rakhi's relief comes in the discovery, after her mother's death of her dream journals, which begin to open the long closed door to her past.

As Rakhi attempts to divine her identity, knowing little of India but drawn naturally into some painful history she is only discovering her life which is shaken by new horrors. In the wake of September 11th, she and her friends must deal with new dark complexities about their naturalization. Haunted by nightmares beyond her imagination, she still finds unexpected blessings about the possibility of new love and understanding for her family. Wenying Xu in his *Reading Feminine Mysticism in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Queen of Dreams* says "*Queen of Dreams* is a mature exploration of feminine mysticism which centres on Mrs. Gupta's persistent effort in recovering and retaining her power at all expense. Unlike ordinary women, a woman possessing power and talent cannot be happy with love alone" (204).

Divakaruni amazed her readers with her perfect individualistic styles, themes and techniques. Being an exile woman writer, she strongly portrays the lives of immigrant women, their loss, alienation, social inequalities and ideological structures of Indian and American societies, assimilation and naturalization in the diasporic field. Her women characters appeared as new women who took their own space. She is a representative of the Indian women's liberation, autonomy and independence in a new society. The questions of identity, recognition, self- construction and adaptability are given equal importance in her literary purpose.

Divakaruni works are full of distinct vibrant satire, the trivial representations of lives lived by women who are caught in the cross roads of a cultural shift. By giving voice to these women, either California, Chicago or Calcutta, Divakaruni reconsider the age old perceptions of women hood making them perform acts of agency and struggles, adapt to their new and changing culture and as a result, they discover their own sense of self joy and sorrow. This awareness leads them to rethink about their own lives as women and their confidence and strength to go ahead.

The novels *Queen of Dreams* is realistically autobiographical in a sense. The story is a reflection of female quest for identity and space. Identity is the most appealing passion of the dispersed societies in an established institution. Many socialists have given their views regarding the issue of identity which is a social concern and demands to make

efforts for its sorrow. Paul Gilroy says that: “Identity is central to discourses of diaspora and, in turn, diaspora has been crucial in unshackling identity from territoriality” (229). Thus identity is the fundamental theme of the novels *Queen of Dreams*. The second chapter deals with difficulties faced by the second generation immigrant Rakhi and how finally she manages to survive in the diasporic land.

Chapter Two

Land of Dreams

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni novel *Queen of Dreams* is an expressive, multi-layered, dislocating novel, which presents a balance between fantasy and imagination in the background severe truth of postmodern society. Family relations, cultural identity, national consciousness, dilemma of contradictory ideologies, noble ideologies and glance of Indian cultural heritage are presented with exceptional content of prose. The cultural concern constructed in *Queen of Dreams* is closely related with the idea of the psychological transformation of the immigrants moving with the shifting spectrum of cultural diversities. The idea of cultural diversity also encompasses the issue how it unifies the sensibility of the past with the present and the alien with the native.

In *Queen of Dreams* Rakhi, the chief narrator turns back her consciousness to the past with the curiosity to analyse the meaning of entries of dream journals of her mother who was blessed with the ability to make interpretations of complex dreams. In the very first entry of dream journal, Rakhi comes across the dream of a moving snake and this moving snake becomes a symbolic representation of the suppressed consciousness of Rakhi herself. Through these journals, she establishes a with the dreams of her homeland. The reflections of these memories have strong link with the suppressed Indian sensibility of Rakhi and in this respect, it becomes the reality of her life. Divakaruni in *Queen of*

Dreams seems to make experiment with the projection technique that helps to bring out the real self of the narrator.

The dream journal works as a motivation in the life of Rakhi to recall the memories of her mother, to find justification for the hidden complexity of her relationship with her mother and also to have a realisation of the intense longing for the Indian life. "I would have preferred the stories to have come from my mother and to have been set in India, where she grew up, a land that seemed to me to shaded with unending mystery" (4). Through Rakhi's nervousness and curiosity, Divakaruni moves in the direction of how children possess a private world of their own to distinguish the mystery of the life of their parents. With her curiosity, she was forced to conclude that her family is in curiosity and more than that the realisation of the position of her mother as dream fellow was a great surprise. She expresses her curiosity for sleeping alone but her mother makes her position clear, "I don't sleep with you or your father because my work is to dream... I dream the dream of other people, so I can help them live their lives" (7).

Rakhi's father informs that her mother used to feel herself different and never shared her private world with others. Her father made a bold revelation, "She didn't love me, not really. She never let me that close. The place right at the center of her - was reserved for her dream gods or demons, whoever they were. She never shared that with anyone" (8). Rakhi like her mother maintains liberty to her own and reveals her

private sensibility only through her paintings. She finds painting as a method to explore an outlet of her secret powers and expectations.

Divakaruni selects the thread of narration through the conflicting pulls of emotions operating on the individuality of Rakhi. After the selection of the theme of paintings, her consciousness shifts to reconsider the nature of her relationship with her husband. Rakhi in spite of being the mother of a young girl child plans of her divorce from Sonny. At this stage Rakhi survives in two different mental spaces making an unconscious and bold search for her wholeness and happiness. She searches for a real female self comprising the sensibility of a mother, sensibility of a woman, sensibility of a wife and the sensibility of a painter. Divakaruni points out the whole scenario:

Rakhi likes the comfortable clutter of her life, the things she loves gathered around her like a shawl against the winterliness of the world. It surprises her that she used to be such an anxious housekeeper when she was married to Sonny, arguing with bitter fervor about picking up her wet towels from the bathroom floor and replacing caps on toothpaste tubes. She feels a certain pity when she thinks of that time, that self. Such an earnest wife self, waiting so much, her stance one of perpetual leaning forward, as though perfection was a town just a little farther down the road. She didn't know then that perfection had nothing to do with happiness. (16)

The self reflection of different characters in *Queen of Dreams* provides a richness and depth to expressions. In these self reflections, if Rakhi perceives the shadows of her past, she simultaneously evaluates the hidden message of dream journals and on the other hand, in the present context her reflections are focused on her own difficulty of personal relationship. The quest for independence from the bondages comes in the form of divorce but her inborn bonding with her maternal feeling and native tradition prevent her from taking such a drastic step. The personal difficulty of Rakhi contains an exceptional experimental tone that imparts profundity and richness to her thoughts. She asserts:

If I'd ruined Jona's chances of a happy childhood by separating her from a loving father. I'd tell myself they didn't know the whole truth. They didn't live with Sonny, they didn't know the way he'd raised his face that night at the party and looked at me, eyes glazed, without recognition. But then I wasn't sure. So many people loved Sonny - even my own mother. How could they all be wrong and I right?" (24)

The expected emotional longing for the past, conveys the rare richness to its expression. Beena Agarwal in his *Voices of Indian Diaspora* says that:

The mingling of East and West, haunting of past and present, the crisis of identity, allurements of West and

consolation of East imparts a rare quality of richness of profundity to the writings of Divakaruni. The perennial current of human sympathy and the longing for human love emancipates her diasporic sensibility from being localized and leads it towards the current of globalization and universality. (149)

For Belle, the idea of Chai house becomes an instrument to escape the burden of domesticity but for Rakhi the idea of domesticity still brings consolation. Mentally, it seems difficult for her to come out of the responsibility of Jona and Sonny. During these moments of crisis, she gathers her consciousness for female identity, and she recalls the teachings of her mother, “Women need something of their own to make them independent. Something to give them a sense of self” (28). Rakhi’s curiosity about her mother gradually converts into the difficulty of her feminine consciousness.

Sonny has mesmerizing effect on her mother and also tries his best to impress Rakhi but in this relationship, she fails to support the vision of her mother and declares, “Now that you and I don’t have a relationship anymore, don’t you think you should back off a little” (30). As a defence to Rakhi’s consciousness, her mother always supports her son-in-law and looks in the direction of a more balanced mode of personal relationship. Her mother’s argument is, “Since when did you start wanting to eat my Indian food, it is always pista and pizza... I love you both, you should know that. You’re not in competition, even though you

did decide to get a divorce” (31). On the other hand, there are drastic changes in the attitudes of Sonny and her mother, “A kinder, gentler, Sonny that only your mom can see, the way she sees her dream people” (31). Rakhi still considers that her idea of divorce is the most crucial decision of her life involving the emotions of her daughter as well as her parents.

Rakhi remains haunted by the mystery and personal life of her mother. She recalls the words of her mother, “a dream is a telegram from the hidden world” (34). The hidden power of dream interpretation makes her aware of the inner power of Indian saints and prophets who can look into inner life of things. Her quest of Indian life inspires her.

Rakhi expresses her curiosity and anxiety to open up the mystery of the secret of power of her mother who could have seen the existence of truths beyond their physical presence. In the context of the hidden mystery of her mother, she reveals her own conflict, “But here’s what’s crazy. I’m thankful, and then, the next moment, I’m filled with regret. Because I will never enter my mother’s underground domain, those caves peopled with possibilities, what may or may not come to pass, where one plus one can equal one hundred - or zero” (42).

In Rakhi’s dilemma, there are gradual flashes of her childhood insecurity. Her mother used to be busy with her clients. In spite of Rakhi’s innate Indian consciousness, her mother broked her birth right and destroyed her to live her life of suburban America. In her over

absorbance with clients, she ignored the needs and existence of her one and only daughter Rakhi. This silence and over indulgence of her mother generates discontent in her life. She expresses her apprehension, “How can she be so unnaturally self-possessed, so different from everyone else? Is it because she already knows what people are telling her?” (44).

In Rakhi’s consciousness, mother’s vision is the reaffirmation of her creative self as a painter. It comes as delight and transports her to get approval of the exhibition of her paintings by Atelier. She expresses her determination to exhibit the bulk of paintings inside the art gallery. Rakhi feels a sense of guilt and shame at the fate of her romantic shelter in her paintings. The invisible zones of her consciousness counter act upon one and another. She suddenly gets a realisation that Jona’s personal life is a secret book in the same manner as the private and isolated existence of her mother. Once she saw her daughter examining her paintings, this secret examination of the paintings strikes her, She admits:

It strikes me suddenly that I don’t know her as fully as I thought I did. She who had come out of my body, tiny and crumpled and containable – even she now has parts to her life that I can’t enter. It doesn’t matter whether they’re real or imagined. I feel excluded all the same. Like the rest of my family - my mother, my father, Sonny - she too has become an enigma. (65)

Through such a realisation of Rakhi, Divakaruni intends to establish that a woman has an instinctive affection with family traditions and it is hard to escape its impact not only at physical level but also at the level of mental contentment. Rakhi's sentiments for Jona, affects her sensibility as a wife and in a state of silence and isolation, she confesses:

Later that night, lying sleepless in bed, thinking of all the things that were going wrong in my life, I'd realize, I'd included Sonny in my family list. And with chagrin I'd admit that he was still family, much as I wanted to disown him. Because only family filled you with such exasperation. Only family could irritate you like a hangnail that you couldn't chew off, no matter how much you tried.
(65)

The escape of Rakhi's mother in her dream journals was an attempt to escape her own isolation and cultural variance. Divakaruni develops the plot of the novel explored it in terms of the feminine personality. In Mangla Ismat observer "the Indian woman is depicted as a passive victim suffering at home and abroad. She attempts to weave the elements of myths, magic and ancient culture alongside contemporary culture" (12).

In *Queen of Dreams*, Divakaruni's vision of personal relationship and cultural dynamics has come close to the observation of Salman Rushdie who accepts: "What deflects us from the subject is the

loss of those we love, of hope, of our place in the book. Loss is more than love or is it more than art or not”(202). Divakaruni present a comprehensive dimension of relationship within the family that works as a motive in the progress of the narrative in context of narrative mechanism. Even in her paintings, unconsciously Rakhi seeks an outlet for the recollections of the memories of purposeful courtship. Her dream of painting a grove with all its foliage becomes a symbolic background of her suppressed sensibility. Divakaruni makes a reference to a particular event when she paints the display of nature but finds it difficult to paint a man with equal care and comfort. It is her failure not with the man in discussion but a female to survive with the darkness of male psyche. Her dissatisfaction as a painter becomes a dissatisfaction to her personal life.

Simultaneously Rakhi focuses in the progress of the journals. She feels the loneliness of her mother, love for Jona, curiosity for the father and an unexpressed admiration for Jona because Sonny takes care of Jona without any complaint. For Rakhi, paintings become the background for the projection of the life images, and explanation of her suppressed sensibility. Through her paintings she overcomes her past but at the same time she creates the dreams of life that are not today but of tomorrow. She mentions her dream, “I want to create something new, something different and magical, only I’m not sure what it will be” (197). She fills the colour of her life in her paintings and feels herself isolated without them. With a deep anguish she confesses, “How can I

explain to her that each day that passes without painting has a hollowness to it, a sense of waste” (197). She finds a wide gulf in the dreams of her paintings and the dimensions of her dreams.

In the dreams of her future Rakhi discovers the solution of her relationship with Jona and Sonny. The dilemma of Rakhi is a symbolic representation of the difficulty existing in the life of each woman, the realisation of self identity and the realisation of the commitments of motherhood. Jona and her illness becomes a connective link to save their relationship from further being lost in indifference. She finds difficult to decline the calls of Jona and admits: “Being in this house with Sonny is gone difficult enough. Being here when he’s around will bring up too many painful memories... but most of all, I don’t want to give Jona false hopes about the two of us getting back together” (210).

The narration here moves in two diverse directions – one is, Rakhi’s agreement with Sonny that marks the beginning of a better tomorrow, a consistency of family unit, and secondly at the professional level her dreams are re-casted in the form of reconstructing the Kurma House. The customers rush increase and it contributes to raise the expectation of the life, “If business continues this way for another month, we’ll hire a chef’s helper” (216). She considers Jaspal fit for that purpose. Belle’s proposal for Jaspal as chef is a start to another mode of involvement in personal relationship. At this crucial moment, Belle’s fascination for Jaspal becomes a passive and expressive setting to strengthen the relationship of Rakhi and Sonny. Belle says, “I’m not sure, I’m crazy

about him and I know he's attracted to me. But I didn't think he was serious, not in this way" (218). Belle thinks seriously about the gravity of these relationships.

The entries in the dream journal provide a deep insight into the anguish of the mother with whom Rakhi used to feel some unexpressed hostility. In the dream journal Mrs. Gupta has mentioned,

It worried me to see my daughter idolizing me this way. There was so much she didn't know about me, that I couldn't tell her. My mistakes, my betrayals, my cowardices. Sooner or later, she was going to find them out and then she'd feel betrayed, too. I wanted to stop that from happening but how? (230)

In this confession, her mother has her dream, the dream of keeping Rakhi all through her life inside her body. Her mission was to push Rakhi into her own body which seems to be impossible. She should do it before her body arises or else it would be pregnancy without end. This particular entry of the dream journal has a deep significance to set an argument of Chitra Banerjee's feminist vision and to settle down to damage the life of Rakhi. The tentative suggestion in mother's fantasy of taking Rakhi inside her body has two important suggestions. First, it shows that a child has an inseparable bond with the mother. Secondly it might denote her unconscious desire to save her daughter from the gaze of the world that might prove apathetic to a woman's existence as it had been witnessed

by her. In context of the narrative, mother's desire also becomes the unconscious desire of Rakhi too. She wants to take Jona inside her real self.

In *Queen of Dreams*, the philosophical undertone imparts an exceptional richness to expression. The three dimensional thread of the idea of involvement in personal relationship, Rakhi through her dream journals of her deceased mother gets involved in her life, subsequently it helps her come out of her own difficulty and to make a reaffirmation of the involvement in personal relationship through Sonny and Jona and in the third place with fire and reconstruction of Chai shop. These changes justify that Divakaruni retains the idea of hospitality and personal relationship and that is the only instrument to ensure happiness in life. Rakhi mentions how her father is so passionate to run Chai shop without least consideration of financial gains.

Divakauni makes a specific attention on the issues of hospitality that is a part and parcel of Indian spiritual life. Her earlier passion for the painting converts and her unconscious wiping of the colours for canvas and the selection of new idea of painting in the form of the portrait of Jona, indicates the growth of the consciousness of Rakhi. In the portrait of Jona, she explores the roots of her own frustrated and confused motherhood. She confesses, "I was now trying for a portrait of Jona in an abstract style but the colour clashed, the composition lacked energy and the figure in the centre didn't possess my daughter's spirit" (251).

In the later part of *Queen of Dreams*, in the later part of the novel, the whole focus remains on the risky position of immigrants in the hybrid society of America. Sonny brings the copies of e-mails that are being circulated by Indian organizations. The warning contained in these newspapers suggests that immigrants can never achieve a safe port in American society. She feels herself both frightened and defenceless, “The notes caution them not to go anywhere alone. Don’t wear your native clothes. Put up American flags in prominent locations in homes and businesses” (274). Overnight all the bonds of society and national belongingness get shattered into pieces. Rakhi is heartbroken to realize “how her neighbourhood has changed.

In *Queen of Dreams*, Divakaruni maintains a fine balance to tie several loose ends of the novel in a contented and universal realisation of the narrative style. The final revelation in dream journals justifies the guilt of her mother and helps her understand the real nature of her relationship with Sonny. The novel *Queen of Dreams* ends with a twine note of deep and self justification. Rakhi finally admits:

She’s content to enjoy this moment, this transient mode of glitter-dust on the web of the world where Sonny and she have touched orbits once more. She dances back to the centre of the room, its nexus of energy, feeling his gaze like a silk dupatta on her shoulders as she goes. (307)

The novel *Queen of Dreams* is a complex novel covering the multilayers of human sensibility beyond the field of caste, gender, race or national consideration. The succeeding chapter throws light on how Mrs. Gupta through her dream journal, establishes her identity and Rakhi finds the true identity of her mother.

Chapter Three

Identity Crisis

Arduous search for Identity traces the identity crisis faced by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's women characters and their search for a new and an independent self identity in the diasporic context. Identity crisis is a period of uncertainty and confusion in which a person's sense of identity becomes insecure, typically due to change in their expected aims or role in society. An identity crisis is a period of serious personal questioning where the individual makes an effort to determine one's own values and sense of direction. When a person goes through a period of identity crisis, that person begins to create a number of self satisfying illusions and starts rationalising the failures or constructs a new self.

The female characters in the fiction of Divakaruni question the nature of their lives, and their roles as mothers, wives, daughters and professionals. This awareness leads them to rethink about their own lives as women, and insert confidence and strength to forge ahead. Divakaruni focuses on the diasporic Indian women caught between two opposing worlds. They find themselves in an in between state, struggling to carve identities of their own.

Divakaruni's novel *Queen of Dreams* will be under critical focus to reflect upon the tensions and conflicts that arise out of the genetic settings in the diasporic context. As the women characters in these novels struggle to define themselves as South Asian and American, they experience a conflict of consciousness. In private, the traditional Indian

culture requires specific duties of women, and strict rules of morality.

Sandra Ponzanesi in her essay *In My Mother's House* states:

As far as the condition of migration and diaspora is concerned, women are often called to preserve their nation through the restoration of a traditional home in the new country. The idea of home entails the preservation of traditions, heritage continuity; there is even an intense emotive politics of dress for some communities. (245)r

In the public place, there is a freedom of self expression on many levels but at the same time the pressures from family and career often begin to clash. The South Asian women begin to experience a conflict that leads to the fragmentation of their selves. This is how they psychologically cope with the cultural conflict they face in their everyday life in their adopted country. Affected by the feminism of America, the Indian women in America begin to move towards the process of assimilation of the American culture.

Queen of Dreams combines the elements of Indian American experience and magical realism, which Divakaruni is known for. The novel deals with the search for identity both individual and communal and a sense of emotional completion. It illustrates the portrayal of a clash of cultures and it has been described as containing Divakaruni's signature fusion of the realistic and worldwide. The intensity with which she deals the terrorist attack and its impact of the Indian community in America makes it one of the most politically searing novels to date.

Apparently it is a simple story of a young ambitious woman in America, but it inquires deep into the questions raised by immigration which is so common in the age of globalization. Rakhi is a single mother and a struggling artist. She has always been uncertainly aware of her own mother's unusual ability to interpret dreams, about which she learns only after her death. She also runs a Chai house with a friend, which is threatened by the Starbucks super café, Java which moves in across the street. The effect of September 11th, a vicious attack on her family and friends calls their notion "citizenship" in to question and how her relationship with her husband and father changes after the attack has been distinctly brought out.

Women can also suffer from too much identification. From this it is understood that feminism depends upon identity and identification. It is within the field of culture that a woman exists and feminist identities are sought to be constructed. A woman's identity cannot be alienated from the religious, national, ethnic and cultural context of her existence. The complexity of her situation and the numerous nature of women's role in different parts of the world make the claims about the universality of gender become extravagant. Both men and women have grabbed the question of identity but with time woman's search for recognition as an individual has got complicated due to the realisation of her abilities and inability to disconnect from culture and assert herself. In the words of Veena Noble Dass:

The Indian woman caught in the flux of tradition and modernity bearing the burden of past and the aspirations of the future is the crux of feminism in India. A search for identity and a quest for the definition of the self have become prime features of women in literature under the sway of feminism. (11)

In the novels of Divakaruni, the identity issue takes on another colour, that of making a position for themselves in their adopted country. She tries to resolve the matters between their circumstances and environment and put the pieces of fragmented selves together. As Divakaruni's states in an article:

We draw from dual culture, with two sets of world views and paradigms juxtaposing each otherExpatriates have powerful and poignant experience when they live away from their original culture – and this becomes home, but never quite, and then you can't really go back and be quite at home there either.” (Rediff Chat)

In her novel *Queen of Dreams* Divakaruni brings out the various problems of identity through her characters. Her characters develop multiplicity of consciousness in viewing themselves. One basic consciousness with which they understand is, a minority class living in America whether they are the first generation Indian Americans or the second generation. Mrs.Gupta, Rakhi's mother who

is the first generation immigrant is broken between her desire for individual existence, family responsibilities and her life as a rescuer of people. The sections that are entitled Dream Journals, in the text, are the diary entries of Rakhi's mother who has withdrawn from her family in order to pursue her dream telling. As an orphan Mrs. Gupta is brought up by an aunt, who recognizes her talent of dream telling and takes her to caves where she learns the art completely. But her visit to Calcutta to improve her art, results in falling in love, which is forbidden to dream tellers but she has no regrets that she has broken the vows. It is only after she comes to America, she is broken by her conscience and realizes that her gift of dream telling has begun to fade after coming here.

The conflicts that Mrs. Gupta must resolve between her marriage which comprises of a daughter and a husband and a life of a dream teller, which keeps her within strictly imposed limits, are an altering of the very same conflicts that all exiles experience between the past and future. Mrs. Gupta's journey through the redefinition of the self in the exile is also an extension of the same conflicts that Indian women experience in establishing their identity and selfhood. She is broken between her spiritual commitment and love for her husband, this is the essence of her struggle, her gift demands total dedication, allowing no space for love. But she is not willing to give up that very human part of herself. It is like a struggle that artists face, who have to be committed if they want their work to blossom.

Mrs. Gupta's dreams of a happy married life get shattered because she has broken the vows of chastity which dream tellers must take. Her frustration on her arrival in America is explained by the snake that visits her in her dream and clarifies that she must give up her love for success in the professional sphere. Her withdrawn behaviour makes her daughter and her husband unhappy and curious. Mr. Gupta resorts to drinking heavily and Rakhi wishes for some communication with her mother who will help her understand her mother's mysterious life and death. Braziel Jana Evans and Anita Mannur in *Theorizing Diaspora* observe: "The older generation cannot afford to invoke India in an authoritarian mode to resolve problems in diaspora and the younger generation will be ill advised to indulge in a spree of forgetfulness about where they have come from" (42).

Rakhi's parents have been typical in not telling her much about India which causes her to hunger for it. India becomes looming and mythical in her imagination. Rakhi is denied the knowledge of the home land because Mrs. Gupta does not wish her to feel the discomfort of separation and longing for Indian heritage as she herself does. And these are factors which describe her identity as similar to the second generation Indian. Avtar Brah in *Cartographics of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* describes this condition of Diasporas in the prevailing culture "All diasporas are differentiated, heterogeneous, contested spaces even as they are implicated in the construction of common" (192). This living in between condition is very insufferable and marginalizing for the

diasporas. There is a longing desire for home to go back to the lost origin, and imaginary homelands which is created from the disconnected and fractional recollection of their motherland. Salman Rushdie in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism*, states:

The immigrants stand bewildered and confused, and show resistance also to the discourse of power in various forms. In the following generations, these confusions, problems and yearnings become less intense as they get influenced by the culture of that country and also adapt themselves to it. (18)

Renunciation, humility, and acceptance are the traditional values that helps to face all crisis in life. Rakhi's daughter Jona also confuses reality and fantasy. She makes up a story of another woman in her father's life and ironically it is not Rakhi but, Jona who inherits her grandmother's powers of dreaming. Divakaruni shows how individual and communal identity is shaped by loss and creation. *Queen of Dreams* is a story of Rakhi a multilayered complex woman who is facing her own inner challenges and peace, pleasure and happiness in a world that is steeped in the consequence of diversity, cultural identity and the importance of family.

Rakhi's unhappy marriage and divorce with Sonny, the disc jockey who counterparts but whose Indian background makes her conscience prick. She wonders whether she has taken the right decision

and is not exaggerating the reason for her separation from her husband. Her divorce may have been a sudden decision. She may be wrong in her understanding of her husband's nature and character after all he is always there to support her in times of distress. Rakhi's mother does not wish her to feel the pain of separation from the homeland. Her father later narrates his experiences to her and fulfils her desire to know things which her mother had not realized would interest her. All these factors describe her condition to the diasporic person, as home is deeply embedded in memories that are not one's own. This sense of home rests deeply in a sense of imagined community which now has nothing to do with nation, but with a shared sense of loss which becomes the constant horizon of one's practice of habitation. This imagined community of candidate defies home by its absence, by its situation as the focus of desire. This may be intensely so for the diasporic subject.

The mythical and ambitious nature of home is possibly that which inserts it so strongly in the imagination. Apart from Rakhi's interest in India and the little facts that she has discovered, her life is also shaken by new horrors. Rakhi runs a Chai house along with another Indian American, Belle but their work is threatened with closure when the American Java café chain opens in the neighbourhood. But her father's contribution of the Indian snacks that he cooks and the arrival of visitors who are brought in by their sense of affection and togetherness, the middle aged Indians who share memories, and then other diasporic

groups who join them because they too experience a similar identity crisis in the capitalist society of the super power America.

The circumstances that Rakhi faces after the attack is again typical of the second generation immigrants who do not feel they are outsiders and are yet considered outsiders. She refuses to show off her patriotism and love for America by pasting posters on the glass window of her tea shop because she is a natural citizen. In the wake of Sep 11th, Rakhi and her friends have to deal with the dark complexity about their acculturation, as second generation immigrants. They are so much a part of that American world that September 11th comes as much a shock and loss to them as to have any other American. Rakhi when told to put a flag outside the Kurma House to show her affinity says, "I don't have to put up a flag to prove that I'm an American I'm an American already. I love this country hell it's the only country I know. But I'm not going to be pressured in to putting up a sign to announce that love to every passerby" (264).

Rakhi feels doubly displaced after the September 11th incident. She is neither an Indian, nor is considered an American by her fellow countrymen. She is insecure in this new and threatening environment, where Jespal, the young Sikh suitor of Belle is mistaken for Muslim fanatic and beaten up badly. This is when Rakhi's acceptance of the American identity or being an American is questioned and she begins to wonder as to where she belongs? When she feels the need for prayer she does not know towards which goddess, American or Indian, should she

aim her supplication? She looks for a sense of community, togetherness and affection, which she only acquires through the rebirth of her relationship with her husband, Sonny who always stood by her when she needed support. September 11th introduced a terrible conflict and confusion into the Indian American community. Rakhi at this moment admits to a little identity crisis and finds it difficult to consider America in terms of home.

Diasporas thus living in one country as the society look across time and space to the other. The immigrant diasporas and their heirs experience ejection, dissolution, marginalization and discontinuity in the cultural dialogue and involvement of subject countries. But unlike these men, Rakhi, Belle and, Jespal who have not experienced enough of India as children, have little or no memory of a home overseas. They are not in the same position as their parents. The only home they know and attached to is the country they are living in. It is the circumstances like these that make these people question their identity, when they are not readily permitted to belong and having been born and grown up in the same country are still called terrorists. This is where the ancestors of migrants suffer similar experiences to their parents. Identity is still a concern with young Indians. Rakhi, Jespal, Belle, and Sonny belonging to the second generation of Indians adapt very well to their environment, as America is not alien to them. Rather they become and want to be Americanized like Belle. She does not like the idea of arranged marriage and fears that her parents would arrange her marriage to an upright

young Indian farmer. They usually buy their supplies from for the produce store they run. She wants to escape from all the pressure her parents put upon her to be Indian. But ultimately she develops a liking for Jespal, a young turbaned software engineer, sent by her parents to meet her.

Jespal has a distinctly American accent. He is also like Belle second generation Indian but who unlike Belle, chooses to keep his affection and connection to his roots through his turban. R.S Pathak in *Indian English Literature: Marginalized Voices* says, “The quest for identity refers to the spiritual odyssey of the modern man who has lost his social and spiritual mooring and who is anxious to seek his roots” (22). Rakhi’s satisfied acceptance of the American home is shattered and she begins to feel an outsider. Though Rakhi cannot imagine herself anywhere else in the world, she needs the sense of community, togetherness and affection. Rakhi also ultimately releases herself of all her circumstances by visiting a discotheque where Sonny invites her. All the inmates are involved in playing some kind of a dancing game which she becomes a part of and that implant in her a feeling of community, which she is most looking for at this time.

Rakhi who feels doubly displaced, insecure and threatened after the September 11th attacks looks for a logical explanation of everything and it is through dance and yoga that she is finally able to revive herself and her relationship with her husband and her father. It is the faith and spirituality that the Indian background has naturally headed down to her

that helps her in tiding over difficult times and provide peace. Bell Hooks observes in *Yearning: Race Gender and Cultural Politics*, “In times of estrangement, home is no longer just one place. It is locations... one confronts and accepts dispersal and fragmentation as part of the constructions of a new world order that reveals more fully where we are, who we can become” (148). The other option open for Rakhi to find peace is to accept the fact that there remains something that is always incomprehensible. One cannot answer all questions and it is the Indian background which is full of faith which helps her in notification over difficult times.

Divakaruni seems to suggest that it is necessary to have faith in the future and not to concentrate on the gaps between logical statement. This is what one has to compromise with to make survival less difficult in the diaspora. The collective chanting of prayers in the Kurma house on the evening of the terrorist attack and the effort of all the visitors to the Kurma House to relieve the feeling of disagreement generated by the attack is all reflective of the Indian bravery in the face of distress. Divakaruni on being asked in one of the interview about Rakhi falling into the victim's role and what must she do to change the direction of her life? replies that she wants her heroine to stop blaming themselves. She needs them to find their way as an artist. She needs to learn to feel ok about unsolved mysteries. She needs them to forgive and trust again and Rakhi does learn all of this.

Divakaruni in *Queen of Dreams* brings out the importance of the family. She reunites the broken relationship and this happens only after the death of Mrs. Gupta. Each and every incident that took place after her mother's death was unbearable, but the fact was that Rakhi was not left in any situation, she had her ex husband, her father and friends to support. It was then she realised the importance of being with them. The following chapter throws light on how Rakhi saves her relationship. It also deals with the theory of mysticism and magical realism.

Chapter Four

Feminine Mysticism

Mysticism is the direct, intuitional experience of God through unifying love. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's interest in feminine mysticism is displayed in her novel *Queen of Dreams* and yields a mature feminist statement about the divine feminine. The feminine mysticism in Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams* elucidates an enduring primitivism that poses a threat to such forms of authorized civilization. Torgovnick further argues that such primitivism should be valued as "utopian desire to go back and recover irreducible features of the psyche, body, land and community" (13). The feminine mysticism employed in the novel recovers and revalidates the feminine knowledge systems that have been suppressed by the patriarchal culture which contributes to the effort to deconstruct the double opposition between primitivism and civilization.

Queen of Dreams unfolds its plots through the mysterious, puzzling, and the magical. Divakaruni employs concept of dreams, caves, snakes and spiders to construct a world that prevents the margin between humans and animals, culture and nature, the human and the divine. Mrs. Gupta, the translator of dreams who reveals to strangers what fortune or misfortunes will happen to them. Her work is different from American mechanism in that she does not charge a fee and she seeks out strangers whose dreams she has entered despite herself. *Queen of Dreams* travels along two story lines: one of Mrs. Gupta and her

dream journals, the other of her daughter Rakhi. The novel opens with Mrs. Gupta's warning of her own nearing death, promoted by a vision of a snake. One particular choice central to her story is chastity, a choice she makes against her passion after she discovers that her power is gradually weakened by her sexual relationship with her husband. She chooses to preserve her power as a dream translator over her love and duty towards her husband. The fact that she refuses to share their marital bed and insists on sleeping on the floor in a separate room gestures towards a feminist statement about the liberating effect of women's emptiness.

Mysticism in *Queen of Dreams* centers on Goddesses and their dictionary that cultivate an entirely different culture from the experimental and materialistic. The Hindu cultural background in the novel, uniquely different from the U.S and European cultures enjoys a living tradition of the worship of Goddesses. Francis Clooney in his *Divine Mother* explains "the cult of Goddesses is not exotic or esoteric, and has not been the passing phase in Indian culture, replaced or about to be replaced by other forms of religiosity" (6). Divakaruni's analysis exceptional female powers in her novel arouses this living tradition and its relationship to the diasporic Hindu community in the United States.

In *Queen of Dreams*, Mrs. Gupta, as a young girl in India, lives with a group of women in caves, whose symbolism of the womb has been established. This women's society is independent and self-sufficient, living with the earth rather than living on and against the

earth. Her dream journals begin with the caves. They introduce Rakhi in an ancient tongue to the women's society in the caves. The condition of its membership is the exclusion of men in their lives. Mrs. Gupta told her daughter: "The first question that the gate keeper asked us novices before we were allowed to enter the caves was whether we were willing to give up all thoughts of husbands and lovers too" (146).

Marilyn Frye explains the word virgin as "a woman one not betrothed, not married, not bound to, not possessed by any man. It meant a female who is sexually and socially her own person" (330). The society of dreamers living in the caves can be seen as inflexible virgins who viewed their talent and work to the most important of all. Mrs. Gupta's aunt initiates the young women into the society of dream readers thus: "One life is too little to be divided between the outside world and the inner one, the world of daylight and that of shadow... a man's kisses will suck your life force from you. You will have nothing left to offer the dream God" (147).

The intrusion of men into the women's world that brings about the turmoil and exile. In *Queen of Dreams*, the women dream readers take a field trip to Calcutta to test their abilities, and it is in Calcutta that Mrs. Gupta breaks her vow of virginity. She chances upon a man in a garden, who mesmerizes her with love songs. The two met in secret and accomplish their love. When found out, the elders were disappointed and chastised her for having been disloyal her art and gift for a man. Unlike a secret male society that is most likely to exact physical punishment or

death for a member's breaking of rules, the mothers in the caves offer the culprit three options.

The first choice was to remain in the cave with the elders for the rest of her life and be a teacher. An elder woman would walk into her memory and remove the man's image. The second choice was to give up her talent and live her life as that of the ordinary woman, as a wife. The elders would adjust her memory so that she would not remember anything about the caves. The third was that she will be allowed to keep her powers, the lesser ones, so that she might help others in the world. In return, she could live with the man, but she must promise not to marry him.

Choosing the third option, Mrs. Gupta believes: "In the eye of the Great Power, then, my spiritual essence would not be joined to his. The door for my return to the sisterhood would thus be closed completely in case. She sees the folly of her choice "I did know that my choice would suspend me for the rest of my days between a world inexplicable forces and the love of a man who insisted that such a world did not exist" (176). However loving and kind Mr. Gupta is, he does not understand or appreciate Mrs. Gupta's talent and power, and he expects her to be no more than a loving wife and mother

In *Queen of Dreams*, Divakaruni makes a feminist statement by endowing matter with greater power than reason, and matter in the novel is symbolised by earth. At the time Mrs. Gupta leaves the caves to be

with Mr. Gupta, her aunt gives her a small pouch that contains a handful of red earth from the walkway in front of the caves. To quote: “grounds that centuries of dreams tellers has stepped on” (176). The red earth not only represent the pathway between the outside world and the secret sisterhood inside the caves but also materially represents the lives of women whose bodies have returned to the red earth after spending their lives among other women. The red earth clearly is a potent parting gift. What is peculiar about this parting gift is that the aunt does not explain its purpose and allows the recipient’s intuition to guide her use it. Mrs. Gupta takes the red earth with her to America without a clear idea what she is to do with it, but she deeply trusts its power.

In California, Mrs. Gupta feels increasingly alienated from her talent. Dreams do not come to her. She begins to experiment with the red earth. At first she scatters a little in her garden. It makes her flowers bloom but does not help her dream. Then she mixes it in her food, but it gives her cramps. Finally, she places the pouch of red earth under her pillow, and her sleep “was filled with colours and scents of home” (177). But her husband wakes up with a headache, complaining that “his sleep was filled with terrible images blood and rubble and dying animals” (177). To her dismay, the red earth in the pouch becomes less each time she uses it. But by now she recognizes her mistakes and realizes that she must break off all ties with her husband and find a way back to the caves.

Divakaruni’s choice of the snake as a messenger evokes symbol of snake in Hindu tradition. Johnson interprets in *Lady of the Beasts*,

“her symbolic threat, known as Kali’s Snake, signifies the umbilical cord, basic to creation” (172). Although in *Queen of Dreams* the snake is referred to as a he, its description as green, shining like rainwater and a raindrop on an ear of maize arouses the feminine imagery of regeneration and earth itself. Divakaruni’s choice of a man as a human form of the snake messenger seems to verify Tate’s argument that serpents long associated with feminine divinity have been taken over by patriarchal traditions. Tate thus ponders about Hindu references of snake Gods: “That is perhaps why the popular culture has the Nagas represented by male Gods” (194). What is illuminating is the realization that the reassessment of snake Goddesses to evil serpents is the very site of warring signification between two opposing system of belief, the Mother Goddess versus the Father God, and the result is the destruction of the religion of the Mother by that of the Father.

The Christian tradition originates the fall of man from the serpent that tempted Eve. In the *Talmud*, it is predicted that Leviathan, the sea serpent will be killed and fed in a feast to the righteous. Divakaruni, writing from the Hindu Culture that has preserved certain traces of Mother religion, manages to recover the feminine and prophetic powers of the snake by making the snake a messenger of Mother Goddess. In *Queen of Dreams*, although the snake is textually marginal, its ample symbolism of the feminine divine is evident. For instance, the novel’s first line is: “Last night the snake came to me” (1), and the snake is

immediately associated with the caves where women dream readers live.

Mrs. Gupta clearly knows the snake. She defines:

He was more beautiful than I remembered. His plated green skin shone like rainwater on banana plants in the garden plot we used to tend behind the dream caves... The last time he'd appeared was a time of great change in my life. He had not returned after that, though I'd cried and called him until I had no voice left. (1)

The snake messenger reveals to Mrs. Gupta that she must leave her husband and return to the caves in order to re-energize her powers. However, soon after this realization she finds herself pregnant. Although she is no longer able to return to the caves, her pregnancy with her daughter restores some of her lost power in dreaming, and as if the power of fertility bounces back some of the power in dreaming, and if a female fetus offers a kind of sisterhood that protects and nourishes her powers. Mrs. Gupta decides to have the child and stay with her husband in California, but she leaves her marriage bed and never returns to it. She learns from both the snake and the women in the caves that a female dreamer should keep her body and soul to herself. In order to maintain her powers, she should retain a strong sense of self, despite the demands of marriage and motherhood. In order to do her work, she must have a room of her own. Years later, her daughter finds this reflection in her mother's dream journal: "I was not a good mother to Rakhi, I loved her, but not fully. To love someone fully is to give up selfhood, and I could

not risk that” (297). Mrs. Gupta regards her talent and her work as too important to be sacrificed for the sake of marriage and motherhood. Mrs. Gupta ends her sexual relationship with Mr. Gupta and moves into the sewing room. Her daughter has always wondered what her mother does in that room since her mother does not sew.

The biggest puzzle in this novel is the man in white, who has no name, no history and no voice. His first appearance signals mystery. Rakhi notices two surprising things in the morning. First the eucalyptus grove is wet with pool of water when there has been no rain anywhere else. Second, there is a man in the grove, “a rare occurrence, so early on a weekday” (10). Rakhi who has come to paint the orchard, begins to watch the man practising his art. Divakaruni describes the man’s motions as underwater movements and offers the first clue to this mysterious man.

The snake who predicted about Mrs. Gupta’s death, who as a mysterious man instructs Rakhi to surrender herself to the forces of nature, who as a policeman, protects Rakhi and her friends from the skinheads and who as a driver of black sedan leads Mrs. Gupta to her death. Mr. Gupta remembers the night after he and his wife left the gallery. Mrs. Gupta drives too fast, unlike her cautious driving habits. When urged to slow down, she says, “I mustn’t lose him... He’s my only chance to get back what I’ve lost” (117). Mr. Gupta recalls, “When the bend in freeway came up, she sailed into it without hesitation, as though it were the route she had intended to take all along”. The night Rakhi comes home from

scattering her mother's ashes, she encounters a black car that fits her father's description:

I feel its approach before I see it- like a heavy-metal vibration, an earthquake gathering its forces underground...when it appears, it is slim and black, an ebony arrow whizzing past me... I'm certain it's the one my mother followed into the end of her life... I catch a glimpse of the license plate EMIT MAERD. (139)

Dream Time suggests a time and space that simultaneously separates from and connected with the dreamer's waking life, time, and space that are both private and intimate. Dream Time according to Jane Caputi, also implies "a state of consciousness characterized by the play of mythic imagination" (4). Dream Time is also relative to Real Time. The Dream Time has led Mrs. Gupta through the gateway into a dream time space that seems both remote from and intimate to this world where her husband and daughter live. Thus she found death as the only gateway for what she was longing for. Near the end of the novel, Rakhi revisits the eucalyptus grove where she first saw the mysterious man in white. She meets him again and learns a few motions of yoga from him. It is through this man that Rakhi finally reconnects with her mother. He instructs her to look up:

I stare at the white aperture in the sky, but this time I'm not dizzy. I feel the warmth from his palms passing into my

hands. Between two eucalyptus branches, laden with silver dew, it is the most intricate thing I've ever seen... and for a split second I have the strangest sensation, as though I were a dewdrop on a web that I can't see, a web huge beyond imagining. The man in white is another dewdrop. and for a split second I have the strangest sensation, as though I were a dewdrop on a web that I can't see, a web huge beyond imagining. The man in white is another dewdrop. (289)

Years later, Rakhi started to dream again. In the dream, they were in an underwater café, filled with a deep, bottom of the ocean blue. There was no one in the room except her mother, Belle and Rakhi. Rakhi turned to speak to them and found that they had turned into sea creatures:

We are in an underwater cafe, filled with a deep, bottom-of-the ocean blue. Everything sways and shivers in this space, and words echo like sonic booms. The table we sit at is made of coral – or is it porous bones? There's no one in the room except for my mother, Belle and myself. I turn to speak to them and find that they have turned into sea creatures. Belle waves her pink anemone tresses at me. My mother turns to me with intelligent seahorse eyes. The manager swims in, but she is outside my line of vision, and I'm not sure what kind of creature she is. (90- 91)

The drinks they ordered came floating through the water. The coffee was black as squid ink. Rakhi reached for it, but her mother was quicker. She took her cup in her mother's fragile seahorse hands and drinks.

The colour seeped, into her, staining her like Shiva of the dark throat, who took in the world's poison to save it from destruction. But my mother, well intentioned though she was, was not as strong as a God. She began to crack apart. Little bits came off her like branches of coral. She's trying to tell her something. The water grows turbulent; the booming is a huge echo in her ears, the manager smiled at her with her shark mouth. (91)

The dream comes true when she comes to know about the death of her mother by an accident. She feels: "the dreams that her mother had protected her from all these years, positioning herself between her and them like a fortress wall, crash over her" (108). Jona, Rakhi's daughter, herself was much interested in painting. She showed some of her paintings to her mother. Rakhi appreciated her drawings and even felt a little jealous of her painting. On the paneled wall were Jona's new paintings, that she had done since her grandmother died. The paintings depicted fires. Some were simple wood fires and others showed homes burning. Still others showed birds with women's faces diving into flames. One was a painting of the earth which glowed like a coal, "chunks of it breaking and flying off like meteors" (136). Earlier her mother could not understand it as the fore-warning of an accident at the

Chai House. Later she could find out and she realized the extra sensory sense of her daughter.

Jona once took her parent's hands in hers and linked them over her chest. Jona was dreaming. But she knew that it was not her dream. The mother called out in her dream, trying to warn the girl, but she's only able to make a smother, meaningless sound. The mother explained that she had the same dream. She states:

It made a special bond between us that night, I guess, when I lay down with my head on your pillow... I was really scared. I wanted to buy that dream from you, like my mother did with me. I even took the coins out of my purse. Did I ever tell you I used to have a nightmare, the same over and over, until your grandma bought it from me?
(205)

The child nodded her face pale. She complained that there were not any girls in her dream, but there was a burning building, with people trapped inside, but they were all adults. That was how the mother learnt that what she dreamt was not her daughter's fear. It was her fear.

From the matters that Mrs.Gupta had written in the Dream Journal, it is obviously revealed about the dream which she learnt it in the cave. According to her view, the spirit would tell about one's truth.

You may never learn this skill. You will see the intricate web of love that binds existence together, and you will never need anything else in order to be happy. The more fortunate among you, blessed by dream, will live long in the world after, and help many souls. But for others the message will come at the moment of death, and will be inseparable from it. For those who need extra guidance, a messenger may appear at the time. Do not lose him or her- it will be your last chance to grasp the truth of the dream time. (208- 209)

After the fire accident in the Chai house, Rakhi realized what her daughter's painting tried to convey. She asks, "Is this what Jona dreamed about, us being trapped in here burning to death? The flames are hotter now, sheets of them flaring out to grab us. Was the dream sent to her to warn me? Is my daughter a dream teller, then?" (224).

The gift Rakhi had longed for all her life had passed over her and lighted on her daughter. After she became a dream teller she could use them to help people, but Jona could not eat and sleep. All day Rakhi paced up and down the faded carpet of the apartment, trying to think of a remedy. She knew that there were no dream tellers in America. During the separation of Jona's parents and after her stay in her father's home she would return to her mother's home. At that time she mentioned about her friend, Eliana who was an imaginary person in reality. Later Mrs.Rakhi found out the truth: "She'll go far, our daughter! What was

that name again? Eliana – with flowers in her hair? Wow! What an imagination that kid has!” (62).

In the last chapter when Rakhi participated in the dancing game. She did not know how she found herself inside the circle and she thought that she slipped. She felt that someone has caught her already. It’s a woman in a loose dress, flowers woven into her long brown braid. She’s wearing a coronet of feathers. “Eliana? Rakhi whispers. Is that you? but the music erases her question” (306). In this way, Divakaruni could beautifully blend magic and reality through extra sensory perception, vision and unusual occurrences.

Magic realism is inclusive of various other techniques. Divakaruni’s use of different story telling techniques like the third person narrative, interior monologue, epistolary exchange, diary entries, stream of consciousness, dream sequences powerfully convey the pain and confusion of the protagonists during their moments of life changing awareness. Her skillful use of these different techniques and styles allows a unique access into the complex consciousness of each of the characters including the men.

The fifth chapter sums up all the four chapters, and presents the researchers findings. It also gives an outlook for future research scholars to work on other aspects of Divakaruni’s works.

Chapter Five

Summation

Indian writing in English refers to literature written in English by Indian authors who have an Indian language as their native tongue. It also includes the body of work in English by Indian Diaspora who are settled in different countries like UK, Canada, Germany, Australia, and West Indies. It has a long history of growth and development as it involves several historical events and distinguished personalities. The origin of Indian literature in English is traced back to the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a Bengali social reformer and a master of English prose begin the development of Indian Literature in English.

The first chapter Introduction has examined Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's place in Indo-American fiction. It has focused on her contemporaries and her major works. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award winning Indo-American novelist, poet and teacher of writing. Her works have been published in over 50 magazines, including the Atlantic Monthly and the New Yorker. Her writing has been included in over 50 anthologies, including The Best American Short Stories, the O. Henry Prize Stories and the Pushcart Prize Anthology. Divakaruni has received many honours and awards. In 1995 she received The American Book Award and PEN Award for the short story collection *Arranged Marriage*. In 2009, she was given the Cultural Jewel Award from the Indian Culture Center, Houston followed by Light of India Jury's Award

for Journalism and Literature in 2011. She was awarded the PremioScanno Award for Literature, Italy in 2015. She has also won awards like the Hackney Literary Award, Barbara Deming Memorial Award, Editor's Choice Award, Gerbode Foundation Award, Pen Syndicated Fiction Awards, Bay Area Book Reviewers Award and American Book Award. She has also won many prizes like Paterson poetry Prize, Pushcart Prize and Allen Ginsberg Poetry Prize. Divakaruni's major works include *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of my Heart* (1999), *The Unknown Errors of our Lives* (2001), *The Vine Desire* (2002), *Queen of Dreams* (2004), *The Palace of Illusion* (2008), *One Amazing Thing* (2010), *Oleander Girl* (2013), *Leaving Yuba City* (1999)

Diaspora is a complex social formation shaped by political imaginaries defined by the materialities of national borders and economies. The term 'diaspora' is evoked as an umbrella or catch-all term, an analytical category. Recently, more scholarly attention has been paid to complicate the terms to loosen the stable connection between diasporic communities and places of origin. With radical changes in the conditions of migration under neoliberal globalization, there is also a recognition of the transnational politics and cultural contradiction that frame diasporic lives. These experiences of the border crossing and relocations raise questions that interrupt assumptions about nationality, citizenship and belonging.

Women writers in India and the Indian diaspora are moving forward with the strong and sure strides matching with the pace of the world. In 1960s, the description of women characters in novels undertake a remarkable change in Indian fiction. Thus with the advent of feminism, women have worked hard to achieve their identity. Writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Meena Alexander, Shoban Bantwal, Kiran Desai, Chitra Banerjee and several others are still combined to enrich the Indian diasporic literature. At present, most of them have been heavily influenced by various literary movements around the world such as symbolism, unrealism, existentialism, confessional poetry, modernism, post modernism in non-native writing.

In the novel *Queen of Dreams*, Divakaruni spins a fresh, attractive story of transformation as lyrical as it is dramatic. Rakhi, a young artist and her divorced mother are living in Berkeley, California is struggling to keep her foot with her family and with a world in disturbing growth. Her mother is a dream teller, born with the ability to share and interpret the dreams of others, to foresee and guide them through their fates. This gift of vision fascinates Rakhi but also isolates her from her mother's past in India and the dream world she inhabits, and she longs for something to bring them closer. Caught below the burden of her own painful secret, Rakhi's relief comes in the discovery, after her mother's death of her dream journals, which begin to open the long closed door to her past.

The second chapter “Land of Dreams” has exemplified family relations, cultural identity, national consciousness, dilemma of contradictory ideologies, noble ideologies and glance of Indian cultural heritage. The cultural concern constructed in *Queen of Dreams* is closely related with the idea of the psychological transformation of the immigrants moving with the shifting spectrum of cultural diversities. The idea of cultural diversity also encompasses the issue how it unifies the sensibility of the past with the present and the alien with the native.

In *Queen of Dreams* Rakhi, the chief narrator turns back her consciousness to the past with the curiosity to analyse the meaning of entries of dream journals of her mother who was blessed with the ability to make interpretations of complex dreams. Through these journals, she establishes with the dreams of her homeland. The reflections of these memories have strong link with the suppressed Indian sensibility of Rakhi and in this respect, it becomes the reality of her life. Divakaruni in *Queen of Dreams* seems to make experiment with the projection technique that helps to bring out the real self of the narrator. The dream journal works as a motivation in the life of Rakhi to recall the memories of her mother, to find justification for the hidden complexity of her relationship with her mother and also to have a realisation of the intense longing for the Indian life.

In *Queen of Dreams*, Divakaruni maintains a fine balance to tie several loose ends of the novel in a contented and universal realisation of the narrative style. The final revelation in dream journals justifies the

guilt of her mother and helps her understand the real nature of her relationship with Sonny. The novel *Queen of Dreams* ends with a twine note of deep and self justification.

Mrs. Gupta's journey through the redefinition of the self in the exile is also an extension of the same conflicts that Indian women experience in establishing their identity and selfhood. She is broken between her spiritual commitment and love for her husband and gift demands total dedication, allowing no space for love. But she is not willing to give up that very human part of herself. It is like a struggle that artists face, who have to be committed if they want their work to blossom.

The third chapter "Identity Crisis" has brought out the importance of family and relationship in America. Rakhi the protagonist of the novel *Queen of Dreams* reunites the broken relationship and this happens only after the death of Mrs. Gupta. Each and every incident that took place after her mother's death was unbearable, but the fact was that Rakhi was not left in any situation, she had her ex husband, her father and friends to support. It was then she realised the importance of being with them.

Divakaruni brings out the various problems of identity through her characters. Her characters develop multiplicity of consciousness in viewing themselves. One basic consciousness with which they understand is, a minority class living in America whether they are the

first generation Indian Americans or the second generation. Mrs. Gupta, Rakhi's mother who is the first generation immigrant is broken between her desire for individual existence, family responsibilities and her life as a rescuer of people. The sections that are entitled Dream Journals, in the text, are the diary entries of Rakhi's mother who has withdrawn from her family in order to pursue her dream telling. As an orphan Mrs. Gupta is brought up by an aunt, who recognizes her talent of dream telling and takes her to caves where she learns the art completely. But her visit to Calcutta to improve her art, results in falling in love, which is forbidden to dream tellers but she has no regrets that she has broken the vows. It is only after she comes to America, she is broken by her conscience and realizes that her gift of dream telling has begun to fade after coming here.

The fourth chapter "Feminine Mysticism" presents an enduring primitivism that poses a threat to such forms of authorized civilization. The feminine mysticism employed in the novel recovers and revalidates the feminine knowledge systems that have been suppressed by the patriarchal culture which contributes to the effort to deconstruct the double opposition between primitivism and civilization.

Dreams, dream journals, and dream telling in the novel *Queen of Dreams* germinate from the oriental cultural belief system. In the novel "dream" signifies the female defence psychology, a safe space or refuge or retreat from which the female resists or liberates the anxiety, fears and feeling of insecurity associated with the fragile sensibility of sex which is the characteristic of the Indian female mind. In the diasporic situation

of internationalization, the fragile female sensibility of sex is shaken and it ends in a divorce as in the case of Rakhi or seeks refuge in the vocation of dream telling that prescribes negation of sex as a necessity. The dreams, dream journals and dream telling implicitly and explicitly demonstrate the anxiety of the female over her sexual honesty which she fears would be spoiled and despoiled by mixing with females and males of different national and racial identities.

Magical realism attempts to capture reality by way of a portrayal of life's many dimensions, seen and unseen, visible and invisible, rational and the process, such writers walk a political tightrope between capturing this reality and providing exotic escape by some of their western readership. Divakaruni's magical realism is to bridge the gap between present and past state of affairs and its prolific entreaty for Indian immigrants who suffers from miscellaneous kinds of tensions is actually a phenomenon.

The fifth chapter sums up all the preceding chapters and presents the researcher's finding. The novel ends with hope because finally Rakhi is reunited with her husband. She realizes her responsibilities towards the family. In the process of this research, the scholar has come across areas that could prove fruitful for further investigating. A Comparative study on Indian and American family backgrounds may be undertaken.

In the process of this research, the scholar has come across areas that could prove fruitful for further investigating. A comparative study

on American and India moral values in families may be undertaken. Research on the effects of race and the novel can be approached through Diasporic theory. The novel can also be analyzed on the theme of cultural clashes. A thematic study based on order and cultural identity can also be researched. The novel can also be analysed in the light of social criticism and an in-depth characterization in the major characters also affords scope for further study.

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Gender Struggle: A Feminist Reading of Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

SAJMINA SUBAHANYA. N

(REG. NO. 19APEN22)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2021

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Gender Imbalance	11
Three	An Exploration of Identity	22
Four	Craftmanship	37
Five	Summation	43
	Works Cited	48

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Gender Struggle: A Feminist Reading of Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*** a novel submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Monomaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Sajmina Subahanya N. during the year 2019-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Dr. F. Mary Priya

Guide

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Gender Struggle: A Feminist Reading of Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

SAJMINA SUBAHANYA N.

April 2021

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A Psychological Study of Dennis Lehane's *Shutter Island*

A project submitted to

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APRIL 2021

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTERS	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Gallery of Themes	10
Three	Psychological Aspects	19
Four	Symbols as Structure	31
Five	Summation	42
	Works Cited	51

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **A Psychological Study of Dennis Lehane's *Shutter Island*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **A Psychological Study of Dennis Lehane's *Shutter Island*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi in partial fulfillment of the requirements affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Saronika.R. during the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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PREFACE

This project entitled **A Psychological Study of Dennis Lehane's *Shutter Island*** analyses Dennis Lehane.

The first chapter **Introduction**, opens with a review on American Literature and the origin, works and achievement of the American author, Dennis Lehane.

The second chapter **Gallery of Themes** deals with various stages of themes and problems in the characters of the novel.

The third chapter **Psychological Aspects** deals with psychology and mental illness, specifically illness that involves psychopathy and the criminally insane.

The fourth chapter **Symbols as Structure** correlates the psyche trauma along with symbolism signifying the concept of setting of the novel.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters accounting from the introduction to the objectives and justifications to the novel *Shutter Island*.

The research has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Hand book Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is an expression of imaginative and artistic fact of human life. According to the definition, it can be identified that the literature comes from experience of real life and can also be defined as an interesting thing in the world. When science focuses to give knowledge as well as with art which focuses to esthetic value, literature covers all of the science and art character Literature is divided into two forms, prose and poetry. Those are basically different as can be understood that prose is one of literature genres which is not bond with rhyme, or certain rules (examples; novels, short story, plays) as poetry is.

The English folk who became Americans during the early years of the seventeenth century kept the language of the relatives and friends whom they left. They owed much to the influences surrounding them in their new homes, but such skill in writing as they processed came with them from the other side of the Atlantic. The name of an earlier group of adventures are associated with the new world because they made a voyage along its coastline or resided for a little while at some seaside settlement.

American literature is the body of written works produced in the English language by the writers of United States. Like other national literatures, American literature was shaped by the history of the country that produced it. The history of American literature begins with the arrival of English speaking Europeans in what would become the United States. The utilitarian writings of the 17th century include biographies, treatises, and accounts of voyages sermons.

In the early years of the 18th century some writers, such as Cotton Mather carried on the older traditions. Mather's huge history and biography of Puritan New

England, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, in 1702, and his vigorous *Manuductio* and *Ministerium* or *Introduction to the Ministry* in 1726 were defenses of ancient Puritan convictions. Jonathan Edwards, initiator of the ‘Great Awakening’ a religious revival that stirred the eastern seacoast for many years, eloquently defended his burning belief in Calvinistic doctrine of the concept that man born totally depraved could attain virtue and salvation only through God’s grace in his powerful sermons and most notably in the philosophical treatise *freedom of will* (1757). He supported his claims by relating them to a complex metaphysical system and by reasoning brilliantly in clear and often beautiful prose.

Three men Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman began publishing novels, short stories, and poetry during the Romantic period that became some of the most enduring works of Americans were written. William Wells Brown published what is considered the first black American novel *Clotel*, in 1853. He also wrote the first African American play to be published, *The Escape* (1858). Henry James shared the view of the realists and naturalists that literature ought to present reality, but his writing style and use of literary form sought to also create an aesthetic experience, not simply document truth. He was preoccupied with the clash in values between the United States and Europe.

The writings of Henry James shows features of both 19th century realism and naturalism and 20th century modernism. Advances in science and technology in western countries rapidly intensified at the start of the 20th century and brought about a sense of unprecedented progress. The devastation of World War II and the great Depression also caused widespread suffering in Europe and the United States. These contradictory impulses can be found swirling within modernism, movement in the arts defined first and foremost as a radical break was often an act of destruction, and it

caused loss of faith in traditional structures and beliefs. Despite, or perhaps because of, these contradictory impulses, the modernist period proved to be one of the richest and most productive in American literature.

T.S. Eliot was an American by birth and, as of 1927, a British subject by choice. His fragmentary, multi voiced “The Waste Land” (1922) is the quintessential modernist poem, but his was not the dominant voice among American modernist poets. Drama came to prominence for the first time in the United States in the early 20th century. Playwrights drew inspiration from European theater but created plays that were uniquely and enduringly American. The United States, which emerged from World War II confident and economically strong, entered the Cold War in the late 1940s. This conflict with the Soviet Union shaped global politics for more than four decades, and the proxy wars and threat of nuclear annihilation that came to define it were just some of the influences shaping American literature during the second half of the 20th century.

The 1950s and 60s brought significant cultural shifts within the United States driven by the civil rights movement. Prior to the last decades of the 20th century, American literature was largely the story of dead white men who had created Art and of living white men doing the same by the turn of the 21st century. American literature had become a much more complex and inclusive story grounded on a wide-ranging body of past writings produced in the United States by people of different background and open to more Americans in the present day.

Literature written by African American during the contemporary period was shaped in many ways by Richard Wright, whose autobiography *Black Boy* was published in 1945 he left the United States for France after World War II. Repulsed by the injustice and discrimination he faced as a black man in America from the

1950s through the 1970s also wrestled with the desires to escape an unjust society and to change it. Toni Morrison's first novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970), launched a writing career that put the lives of black women at its center. She received a Nobel Prize in 1993.

Thriller is a genre of in this novel having numerous often overlapping subgenres. Thrillers are characterized and defined by the moods they elicit giving viewers heightened feelings of suspense, excitement, surprise, anticipation and anxiety. Successful examples of thrillers are the films of Alfred Hitchcock. Thrillers generally keep the audience on the edge of their seats as the plot builds towards a climax. The first recognizable modern thriller was Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903), in which two young Englishmen stumble upon a secret German armada preparing to invade their homeland.

Mystery fiction is a genre of fiction that usually involves a mysterious death or a crime to be solved. Often within a closed circle of suspects, each suspect is usually provided with a credible motive and a reasonable opportunity for committing the crime. The central character is often a detective. Mystery fiction can involve a supernatural mystery in which the solution does not have to be logical and even in which there is no crime involved. This usage was common in the pulp magazines of the 1930s and 1940s, whose titles such as "Dime Mystery", "Thrilling Mystery" and "Spicy Mystery" offered what were then described as complicated to solve and weird stories supernatural horror in the vein of Grand Guignol. That contrasted with parallel titles of the same names which contained conventional hardboiled crime fiction.

Perhaps a reason that mystery fiction was unheard of before the 1800s was due in part to the lack of true police forces. Before the Industrial Revolution, many of the towns had constables and a night watchman at best. Naturally the constable was aware

of every individual in the town and crimes were either solved quickly or left unsolved entirely. As people began to crowd into cities police forces become institutionalized, and the need for detectives was realized-thus the mystery novel arose.

Suspense is a state of mental uncertainty, anxiety, of being undecided, or of being doubtful. In a dramatic work, suspense is the anticipation of the outcome of a plot or of the solution to an uncertainty, puzzle, or mystery, particularly as it affects a character for whom one has sympathy. However, suspense is not exclusive to fiction.

Psychological novel, work of fiction in which the thoughts, feelings and motivations of the characters are of equal or greater interest than is the external action of the narrative. In a psychological novel the emotional reactions and internal states of the characters are influenced by and in turn trigger external events in a meaningful symbiosis. In the psychological novel, plot is subordinate to and dependent upon the probing delineation of character. Events may not be presented in chronological order but rather as they occur in the character's thought association's memories fantasies, reveries contemplation, and dreams. In this type of writing character and characterization are more than novels of other genres. The psychological novel of the genres. The psychological novel can be called a novel of the "inner man" In some case the stream of consciousness technique, may be employed to better illustrate the inner workings of the human mind at work Flashbacks may also be featured.

Psychoanalysis began to appear with the late Victorian writers. With the late Victorian period, psychological analysis began to appear in novels like that of Henry James. James focused on the motives and psychology of his characters rather than their action. This depended on the reader's part in the novel. Psychological horror usually aims to create discomfort or dread by exposing common or universal psychological and emotional vulnerabilities fears and revealing the darker parts of the

human psyche that most people may repress or deny. This idea is referred to in analytical psychology as the archetypal shadow characteristics distrust, self-doubt, and paranoia of others, themselves, and the world. The genre sometimes seeks to challenge or confuse the readers grasp of the narrative or plot by focusing on characters who are themselves unsure of or doubting their own perceptions of reality or questioning their own sanity. Character's perceptions of their surroundings or situations may indeed be distorted or subject to delusions, outside manipulation or gaslighting by other characters emotional disturbances or trauma and even hallucinations or mental disorders.

In other case the narrator or protagonist may be reliable or ostensibly mentally stable but is placed in a situation involving another character or characters who are psychologically, mentally, or emotionally disturbed. Thus, elements of psychological horror focus on mental conflicts. These become important as the characters face perverse situations, sometimes involving the supernatural, immorality, murder, and conspiracies. While other horror emphasizes fantastical situations such as attacks by monsters, psychological horror tends to keep the monsters hidden and to involve situations more grounded in artistic realism. Characters commonly face internal battles with subconscious desires such as romantic lust and the desire for petty revenge. In contrast, splatter fiction and monster movies often focus on a bizarre, alien evil to which the average viewer cannot easily relate. However, at times, the psychological horror splatter subgenres overlap.

Gothic fiction merges deep passions with chill dead. A Gothic story might include grand and decaying architecture, like medieval castles, English manors, or southern mansions; grim weather, like freezing rain or oppressive heat; ghosts; darkness, with or without candles; mental illness; dungeons, basements, secret

passageways, and labyrinths; eroticism; sick or sickly women; blood; gloomy forests; and of course, the aforementioned sublime emotions and eerie atmosphere.

One of the crucial components of a captivating Gothic story evokes feelings of suspense and fear. Anything that is beyond scientific understanding lends way to mystery, and Gothic atmospheres leverage this principle. Many Gothic works contain scenes, events and objects such as burials, flickering candles, evil potions, and other frightful concepts. This in Ann Radcliffe's 1794 novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. The story centers around Emily St. Aubert, an orphaned girl who was subjected to cruelties by guardians and imprisoned in castles. The work included strange, fearful events and a haunting atmosphere that came to define the genre in the years to come.

Dennis Lehane was born on August 4, 1965, in Dorchester, Massachusetts. According to an article entitled "*The Biography of Dennis Lehane*" which published by Lit lovers, Lehane has written several award-winning novels, including *A Drink Before the War* and the New York Times bestseller *Mystic River*, which was later made into an Academy Award-winning film. Another novel, *Gone, Baby, Gone*, was also adapted into an Academy Award-nominated film.

The novel *Shutter Island* was adapted into a film by Martin Scorsese in 2010. *Shutter Island* was published on April 15, 2003. Lehane as the great contemporary American writers, nothing his depth and ability to drill down on characters. "*Shutter Island*" (2003) Finalist 2004 Anthony Award for Best Award for Best Novel Finalist 2003 Hammett prize. Dennis Lehane's most recent novel, *Since We Fell*, feels like an eerie shadow of modern-day life: The Protagonist, Rachel Childs, is afraid to go out of her apartment

This psychological thriller first set in 1954 on summer, the time when World War two only separated 10 years before. The novel then, bring the reader to the two

U.S. Marshals Teddy Daniels and his new partner Chuck Aule when these guys are on their way to Shutter Island a place of Ashecliffe Hospital for the criminally insane. Teddy was assigned to investigate the disappearance of a patient, named Rachel Solando. She had been sectioned at the institution for dangerous criminals, because she drowned her three kids.

Teddy is a veteran World War II soldier, traumatized by the war experience and the loss of his wife in a criminal fire. As these two Marshals dive deeper into their investigation to find out where Rachel has gone, they discovered a code on a piece of paper that he believes the code points to a 67th patient, when the records of the Ashecliffe show only 66. Teddy also reveals that he wants to avenge the death of his wife, Dolores, who was killed two years prior by a man named Andrew Laeddis, who he believes is one of the patients in the Ashecliffe.

This novel has described a form of mental disorder, which is schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is characterized by severe distortions of reality, withdrawal from social interaction, disorganization and fragmentation of perceptions, thoughts, and emotions. It is a dark book, but that's nothing new for Lehane, a writer who burst onto the crime drama scene-well, it sure felt that way for many of us readers in 1994 with a series of books about a pair of Boston private investigators.

Teddy Daniels has mental disorder when he believes and act like a detective. He wanted to settle a case on an island which a psychiatric hospital of the island. Teddy believes that he is Teddy Daniels, a detective who will investigate a case of patient's escape at the hospital, Rachel Solando. In fact, he is Andrew Laeddis, a mental disorder patient in Ashecliffe and his entire story is fictional story which is part of his delusion and hallucination.

The readers has chosen *Shutter Island* novel as the object because it is one of some famous novels that has place in the societies' heart. It means the story of the novel is understandable. The writer notices that in the Shutter Island, the protagonist did many things that could be considered as hallucination activities. He is highly intelligent and highly delusional. Known proclivity for violence. Extremely agitated. Shows no remorse for his crime because his denial is such that no crime ever took place. The book says, "Patient has erected a series of highly developed and highly fantastical narratives at this time, his facing the truth of his actions." (154). All of his hallucination is begun with the death of his wife, Dolores. The death of Dolores is a cause for this all hallucination. Dolores's death shocks Andrew Laeddis, and it troubles his psychology. Teddy's hallucination which is abnormal. The writer can analyses psychology of Teddy Daniels and find the type of all his hallucination.

Shutter Island is a fictional story created by Dennis Lehane, about two marshals who has been put on the case of investigating a disappearance of a patient at a mental facility at *Shutter Island*. In the end Teddy wakes up to the reality that he himself, is the missing patient and the entire investigation has been a set-up all along in hope that he would acknowledge his trauma of losing both wife and kids. The writer notices that the main character is the representation of someone who tends to have hallucination and showing several self-defense mechanisms from the way he behaves in every part of the story. The problem to be raised is how this character uses the self-defense mechanism to cope with the problems he faces and solves it. The second chapter deals with the various themes of the novel. It helps to under the crisis suffered by the protagonist Daniels.

Chapter Two

Gallery of Themes

The central theme of the novel *Shutter Island* is mental illness, specifically illness that involves psychopathy and the criminally insane. Each of the characters is either a psychiatrist or a patient but even the doctors seem to suffer from some kind of psychological disorder, such as Dr. Cawley, whose belief in his theory that all people are violent at their core borders on obsessive. Teddy the protagonist, is said to be delusional, and the patients have varying degrees of psychopathy. There is also an assertion in the novel that a person can be driven insane if he is given the right combination of drugs and circumstances.

The book *Shutter Island* takes most of its setting on Shutter Island, inside an abandoned hospital for the criminally insane. It is a place where nobody can escape. The whole place is under strict surveillance from the weather and monsoons due to the location in the sea on a vast land. Teddy does not know that he is put under a new physiological theory to help him. On this island there is a lighthouse where he had been tested every year to see if the doctor's treatment has worked on him. He still had a chance to live or a chance to escape but fails and goes under illegal brain surgery where they take away the thought of living one basically become a zombie and lives on the island forever. There is also a cave where he finds the truth about the island, he is stranded on from a girl named Rachel Solando, his loose patient and spills out everything.

Another theme that is revisited many times throughout the novel is conspiracy theories. George Noyes, a prisoner, had talked about illicit experiments and abusive treatment of patients at *Shutter Island*. It is apparent that it would be very easy for the authorities to cover up any illicit activity by claiming that the accuser was delusional

or paranoid. The novel takes place in a time of acute paranoia: worrying about a Japanese Fifth column within the United States, about communist infiltrator's Nazi scientists working under assumed identities in the United States, and CIA experimentation. By filling his novel with conspiracy theories that did in fact turn out to be, Lehane intensifies the suspicious atmosphere on Shutter Island.

"I assume everyone knows why we're all here," Teddy said. "You had an escape

last night. Far as we can tell, the patient vanished. We have no evidence that would allow us to believe the patient left this institution without help. Deputy Warden McPherson, would you agree?" (55)

Andrew's delusion is formed as a way to protect himself from anxiety. His delusion of being a marshal named Teddy Daniels becomes one of his defense mechanisms in the form of denial. Teddy's inner thought wants to deny his past and unconsciously creating a fantasy to avoid his painful memories in the past. Many of the characters in *Shutter Island* suffer from grief over lost loved ones. Teddy most obviously, suffers from the memory of his wife Dolores, while Chuck suffers angrily from the memory of his girlfriend's internment. Dr. Cawley mentions the loss of a lover in Paris, who amid all of the carnage during the war simply tripped and fell and died. Rachel Solando has been driven mad by the grief of her husband's death, and grief for the loss of her children whom she killed. If we read the novel to mean that Teddy is in fact Andrew Laeddis, then the novel is no longer a mystery but a meditation on grief. It is possible to let go of painful memories, or to forgive oneself for wrong doing. It is impossible particularly in a world as harsh as the one he has experienced. Life is divided into three periods of times which are past, present and future. These three periods of times have domino effect. Something that happened in

the past will affect events happening in the present and will happen in the future. This term is just like some disease called trauma.

Trauma is an illness caused by unfortunate incident which happened in the past and can bring changes in the future. It can be a good or bad change. It is a good change when the person can take the result from the unfortunate incident and make it as a lesson. While in another point, it is a bad change when the person cannot accept the result of the reality from unfortunate incident that happened in the past and leaves some wound about it in their mind.

Novel described trauma as the main issue of the main character. Trauma becomes the controller of the story from the novel. Andrew Laeddis as the main character, is suffering trauma because of the horrible incident that he experienced in his past. The horrible incident was his witnessing on his beloved wife Dolores' action of killing their own children. After the incident, Andrew Laeddis knows Dolores had mental disorder and make her always want to kill her own children without any hesitation. In the end, Dolores killed their own three children by drowning them in the lake at the back of their house.

Teddy was diagnosed as "a man of violence", and this was in fact apparent when Dr. Cawley showed Laeddis intake to Teddy. The reason why the reader gets attached and develops empathy for this character despite his brutal side is because the novel not only presents the protagonist is perspective but mostly from the point of view of Dennis Lehane. The context is hence important in this situation and the power of the author thus resides in his ability to make the readers interpret the story through his eyes.

Indeed, he places Teddy more as a victim of his mind rather than a murderer, besides, introducing violence in this novel allows to depict the origins of violence in

human nature and allows to have a better understanding of it. Moreover, it pushes the readers to identify the character and his experience and to relate it to their own. As a matter of fact, violence as a theme constitutes a crucial element in literature in a way that it affects not only the characters but even the readers.

In *Shutter Island*, the story happens in a world still affected by the consequences of war and violence, and is run by paranoia and its attributes. Thus, Dennis Lehane used his novel not only as a portrayal of internal conflicts related to the self, but also as a pure reflection of what the external conflicts looked like and their impact on the society. *Shutter Island* is not only restricted to Andrew but extends to Dr. Cawley who had lost the love of his life in Paris during the war, and Rachel Solando who suffers from the loss of her children and her husband. Therefore, grief in *Shutter Island* is diverse and touches many characters, and each one of them reacts differently for Teddy it appears as hallucinations while for Dr. Cawley it does not. The grieving process depends on the meaning accorded to the loss.

Shutter Island shows how each person deals with grief in a different manner, and how each character responds, and Dennis Lehane reinforces this vision in order to dissociate Teddy's condition from the others. Furthermore, the prevalence of guilt in the literary field is as important as that of grief. In fact, grief can sometimes be accompanied by the feeling of guilt and the latter impedes the grieving process, for the person feels culpable for the death of the departed. Moreover, the feeling of guilt appears in people who have the impression that they should have done more, or done something differently and more carefully.

In *Shutter Island*, Teddy feels responsible for what happened to his children, he thought that he could have prevented that if only he had helped his wife to get

cured instead of doing nothing, besides he murdered her, hence, his grieving process was disrupted and got even more complicated with his guilt.

On the novel's third day, Teddy's encounter with Dr. Rachel Solando introduces the idea that institutional power dictates truth. Because the psychiatrists at *Shutter Island* are in the position of determining who is sane and who is not, they essentially have control over reality, by declaring those who disagree with them, or seek to criticize them, as insane. Leane repeatedly draws parallels between the medical realities of the psychiatric profession and the profession political abuses, as for example by Senator Joseph McCarthy, who accused his political opponents of being Communists. Teddy's struggle to establish what is really going on at Ashecliffe ultimately fails, and the reader is left without the sense that there is a firm truth beyond the reach of Ashecliffe doctors.

Shutter Island is filled with vivid natural imagery, like the terror of the storm, the overwhelming ocean, the jagged cliffs the portentous sky before the rain. The natural world in *Shutter Island* is one that is hostile to human beings, not simply because of its violence, but because of its unfathomable enormity.

Teddy's first memory is of vomiting after seeing the ocean's enormity, and the many overwhelming natural occurrences on the island drive home the sense that the natural world is one that is fundamentally inhospitable to human beings and that ultimately exceeds our comprehension. The warden surmises that nature is simply violence, and that all attempts to establish a more civilized society are doomed to fail, because, as natural beings, humans' violent tendencies cannot be suppressed.

In *Shutter Island* Andrew's wife for there are multiple traumas. One can obviously bear witness to the similitude between the Freudian recounted story of Tasso and *Shutter Island* in that Andrew, constantly in several sections of the story

finds himself recurrently encountering Dolores in state filled with nothing but regret, guilt, and remorse for having lost her for all he knew due to his psychosis, and Andrew Laeddis had committed that unforgiveable crime and was awaiting retribution.

If not for the delusions of the leading character, would remain only a bare and monotonous line of two detective is resolute efforts in untangling the elusive escape of a Rachal Solando a notorious multiple murderess who drowned her three children in cold blood from a locked high security room in the Ashecliffe Hospital.

In point of fact, the entire narrative is an instrumental means to an end of approaching the psyche of Andrew as to share with him the grave severity of his illness the regressions he had prior to then the violence he was using to hurt other patients and guards, the delusions he had solemnly webbed around his unredeemable soul and, as a culminating goal to unveil and expose the very private portions of his dying soul to him.

The perverted thoughts of Andrew including all his delusional plot constituting notions such as the experiments happening in the lighthouse, his delusion-based characters Solando, Chuck, Laeddis the Nazi run experiments, his hallucinatory meeting with a factitious Solando in the cave and the storm coinciding with all the other events whose arrangement comes at the hands of psychiatrists and their role play games. The novel suffers from an unreliable narration, since Andrew is revealed to be an untrustworthy source of narration due to his unreliable mental state.

Andrew's first internal conflicts appeared when he had conversation with Chuck in the ferry. Chuck asked about his wife, Dolores, and it made him suddenly remembered of her. Andrew saw his wife in the mind. He was picturing Dolores in

the brain so he saw her face again. Actually, he preferred not to discuss about his wife at all because when he saw her in the mind, all he got was just the pains.

Teddy saw her again, her back to him as she walked down the apartment hallway, wearing one of his old uniform shirts, humming as she turned into the kitchen, and a familiar weariness invaded his bones. He would prefer just to do about anything swim in that water even – rather than speak of Dolores, of the facts of her being on this earth for thirty-one years and then ceasing to be. Just like that. (35)

Andrew was described as person suffered from trauma. It was shown in his specific descriptions. One of them was person who often got nightmare. In this time his nightmare about his hometown, the man who killed Dolores named Andrew Laeddis his partner for missing patient named Chuck Aule, Dr. Cawley, the missing patient named Rachel Solando and her three children. It became his worst nightmare because in this dream he was shown how sadistic Rachel Solando killed her own three children two boys and one little girl.

They were the worst dreams he'd ever had. They began with Teddy walking through the streets of Hull, streets he had walked countless times from childhood to manhood. He passed his old schoolhouse. He passed the small variety store where he'd bought gum and cream sodas. He passed the Dickerson, the Boyds, the Vernons, the Constantines. But no one was home. No one was anywhere. It was empty, the entire town. And dead quiet. He couldn't ... her mouth still smeared with peanut butter and jelly. (209-216)

Trauma in *Shutter Island* does not only in here in one character and in a single time occurrence as one might expect but, in several characters, and numerable

recurrences. *Shutter Island* novel is a bestselling novel set in Boston during 1954 is more precisely after World War II. Trauma becomes the controller of the story from the novel. Andrew Laeddis as the main character is suffering trauma because the horrible incident that he experienced in his past. The horrible incident was his witnessed on his beloved wife, Dolores' action of killing their own children. After the incident, Andrew Laeddis knows Dolores had mental disorder and make her always wants to kill her own children without any hesitation. In the end Dolores killed their own three children by drowning them in the lake back of their house. Units of analysis were divided into two terms.

Those were intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic element described the specific descriptions of the main character, conflicts experienced by the main character, and settings which pictured in novel *Shutter Island*. Moreover, the extrinsic element described the causes and effect of trauma which suffered by the main character. The effect of Andrew's trauma was his action of making a fictitious dense narrative. This was becoming his denial response of the truth. All the staff of Ashecliffe had given a role play to help him staged the story. The first, he became a U.S. Marshal under named "Teddy Daniel" alongside with his partner named "Chuck Aule" who took in hand a case about missing patient named "Rachel Solando" in *Shutter Island*. In fact, "Chuck Aule" was his primary psychiatrist in Ashecliffe named Dr. Lester Sheehan.

'And this woman who escaped?'

Teddy said, 'Don't know much about that. She slipped out last night. I got her name in my note book. I figure they'll tell us everything else.'

Chuck looked around at the water. 'Where's she going to go? She's going to swim home?' Teddy shrugged 'The patients here, apparently,

suffer a variety of delusions.’

‘Schizophrenics?’

‘I guess, yeah. You won’t find your everyday mongoloids in here in any case. Or some guy who’s afraid of sidewalk cracks, sleeps too much. Far as I could tell from the file, everyone here is, you know, really crazy.’ (39)

At the end of the story the above-mentioned incidents, to a certain degree, managed to take place all throughout the plot. Thus, in short, the plot is a mysterious juxtaposition of Andrew’s mentality and the role play psychiatry. In other terms, what cannot happen are helped to happen to give rise to a baffling plot whose fiction and reality can barely be told from each other, thereby finding a symbiosis of an equal weight.

The plot whose equilibrium might shatter easily should either side discord with the other. However, the entire novel, irrespective of its reliable or otherwise unreliable nature, employs Andrew’s traumas as the hinge upon which it revolves. Traumas of Andrew’s albeit of a reliable nature, ironically give rise to a mentality which suggests otherwise, hence the urge to dissect them.

Chapter Three

Psychological Aspects

Shutter Island focuses on the character of Teddy and his thoughts about what was happening in the island and his suspicion of the Ashecliffe doctors of conducting illicit activities and drugging him with hallucinogen cigarettes. In addition, it puts forward his hallucinations and his dreams and what he thought about them alongside with his feelings of insecurity and constant fear.

The novel includes several elements that revolve around psychoanalysis and psychological issues mainly trauma disorder that are the result of Teddy Daniels' repression of the death of his children and the murder of his wife. As a matter of fact, *Shutter Island* comprise concepts like dissociative identity disorder or more commonly called "*Split Personality Disorder*", and the manifestation dreams

Teddy had his worst dream, the content includes Rachel Solando drowning her kids in a lake, she told Teddy that she would be his Dolores and he would be Jim, her husband, and in the same dream, he saw a wet little girl that took him for her dad, and they both headed to the graveyard where there was a tomb in which was transcribed "Edward Daniels". This can be explained using Freud's concepts of repression in fact Teddy's repression of the traumatic event caused him to dream about it as if the mind was facing it again, as Freud had demonstrated in his theory of "The Return of the Repressed".

This chapter, analyzes Andrew's schizophrenia based on the data from *Shutter Island*. First Andrew's schizophrenia based on psychoanalysis point of view and second, the treatments that are used to cope with Andrew's schizophrenia is analyzed. Before describing the two problems, it is necessary to give a brief description of some traumatic events in Andrew's past as determining factors of his schizophrenia as

being described in the novel. Andrew's subconscious mind created a defense mechanism to forget his trauma that is too painful for him to be remembered.

The story follows the main character, Andrew Laeddis, a schizophrenic patient in the Ashecliffe, a hospital for the criminally insane. He was once in of the United States Army in World War II, who has been assigned in Dachau, against Nazi. Andrew was first haunted by his time serving at the army during World War II, in the concentration camp. He considered himself as a monster for killing all those innocent people at the camp, and this being a big influence of what Andrew feels later. He and the American army then brutally slay the remaining German soldiers the horrific sights never left Andrew's mind. Andrew's psychological problem gets worse when Dolores sets the old apartment on fire as the aftermath of her suicide attempt. Instead of getting psychiatric help, Andrew refused to accept it, moving his family out to a lake house, hoping that getting out of the city might be enough for Dolores.

Teddy associated Rachel Solando to Dolores because he unconsciously knew that she was the same person and concerning the little girl the dream of his daughter who was wet due to the drowning and the reason why he saw her his guilt towards what happened. Furthermore, the symbol of the tomb in which the same he attributed to himself referred to his unconscious remorse and desire to die. *Shutter Island* novel combines all the necessary elements that constitute a psychological novel and gathers several psychoanalytic notions. Leane's *Shutter Island* carries an ending shocking yet so faithful to what has come before. It will go down as one of the most aesthetically right resolutions ever written. There the pursuit of the nature of self-knowledge and self-deception, and the ways in which both can be warped by violence and evil.

Teddy who suffers from a kind of schizophrenia and tries to conceal the truth about the death of his wife and children. Psychodrama applies directed dramatic action to examine problems or issues raised by an individual to deal with conflicts and gain insight through action. In this case, the psychodrama was presented through role-play methods. As Andrew schizophrenia follows his delusional story where he involved people around him into his fantasy world, Dr. Cawley who believes in modern psychological treatment created this method.

The story mainly follows the narrative where Andrew's psychodrama treatment is being carried out. Dr. Sheehan who plays the role Chuck, Andrew's U.S Marshal newly met partner together with Dr. Cawley confront Andrew with the reality by clues in order to look at Andrew's problem-solving skills. Their purpose is to lead him to realize that what he has been thinking all this time is just fantasy and he is, in fact, Andrew Laeddis. Dr. Cawley, assisted by Dr. Sheeshan, stage an elaborate role play as one final desperate attempt to break to the real Andrew. They are getting everyone in the facility involved. Each was playing a part to fit into Andrew's fantasy. The attempt is to lead him through his fantasy and play into it at every step to prove to him that it is not real. Cawley decided to reveal the truth to Andrew gradually.

In psychodrama, the purpose is to facilitate a patient's own process rather than teaching them directly about the truth. In the end, they hope by doing that, it will bring him to face his past and hopefully could bring Andrew back to sanity. This method is all about proper planning, details, and timing. In order to make Andrew belie that he is all delusional, they have to make him realize the fact by himself. When Andrew is all sure with the human experimenting in the lighthouse, Dr. Cawley confronts him with the real fact so that the main character can accept it after proving all of his fantasy is not real. Based on the basic elements of psychodrama composed

by American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama, it matched the characters in their role in the psychodrama carried out in the novel.

Andrew the protagonist in this role-play is the person selected to represent theme of a group in the drama. This whole role-play follows his delusional narrative in order to bring him back to his common sense. The auxiliary egos are represented by Chuck and Rachel Solando because they both played the most significant role in the drama. Chuck plays the role of Andrew's partner, making him to be the one who is in control of Andrew's behavior from the beginning until the end. Meanwhile, Rachel is the key of this role-play, to show how similar she is to his wife, Dolores and how Rachel's missing case does not make any sense at all. The audiences are represented by other actors such as the nurses, the guards, the ward officers and the patients. The represented by Dr. Cawley, the mastermind behind this entire experiment. A clue was found by Teddy in Rachel's room during her disappearance. This created message is part of the mystery set up by Cawley.

THE LAW OF 4

I AM 47

THEY WERE 80

+YOU ARE 3

WE ARE 4

BUT

WHO IS 67? (67)

It means the four names that are an anagram for one another, Teddy Daniels with Andrew Laeddis and Rachel Solando and Dolores Chanele. While the 67th patient is indeed himself in reality, Andrew Daniels. Since Andrew is a violent patient, who never hesitates to use violence to those who distract him from his fantasy, they cannot

let him act on his own. So, he is being teamed up with a partner, Chuck as he is someone Teddy has never met before but inherently seems to trust. In real life, Chuck is Andrew's doctor, Dr. Sheehan, here playing the part of his partner. This is why they get along right after the first meeting. It represents one of the elements in the psychodrama, where people around the schizophrenic person together joining his or her fantasy, playing as actors. In this case, in order to be able to bring Andrew back to his reality and accepting his traumatic memories, Dr. Cawley creates clues that refer to his real life as Andrew, not Teddy. Andrew's psychodrama treatment also supported. There is a scene when Teddy and Chuck are in Dr. Naehring's room, Cawley played a record of the music that Andrew also heard during World War II, at Dachau.

Cawley, behind them, placed a record on the phonograph and the scratch of the needle was followed by stray pops and hisses that reminded Teddy of the phones he did tried to use. Then a balm of strings and piano replaced the hisses. Something classical, Teddy knew that much. Prussian. Reminding him of cafes overseas and a record of collection he'd seen in the office of a sub commandant at Dachau, the man listening to it when he'd shot himself in the mouth. He was still alive when Teddy and four GIs entered the room. Gurgling. Unable to reach the gun for a second shot because it had fallen to the floor. (46) By hearing the music, he remembers himself sadistically let the Germany colonel gurgling in blood after shot himself, watching him for about twenty minutes until his death. It proves that psychodrama can use visual even audio relating to patient's forgotten memory to confront them to remember it. The use of psychodrama as a treatment in the novel is to avoid the use of psychosurgery on the main character,

Andrew Laeddis. At the time, the story takes place in 1954 when there is a war of source among doctors about how to treat the mentally insane, particularly those with violent natures. To many contemporary doctors, these patients were considered no longer human or monster and essentially unable to be cured. It led to the rise of lobotomies use on patient to make them easier to control. In the novel, this old-school perspective is represented by Dr. Naehring who has no compassion for his patients. On the other hand, more modern philosophy of treatment began to emerge in counterbalance to this. This perspective represented by Dr. Cawley who believes in treatment without the use of psychosurgery but by treating them with care in compassion to hopefully cure them or at least help them face their issues at the core of their madness.

Another symptom of schizophrenia can be found in Andrew character is the hallucinations. Andrew's hallucinations rise as the result of his guilt for what happened to his family. The feeling of guilt is just too much for him to handle, so his unconscious mind performs a defense mechanism to cope with it. He started to delusions and hallucinating as a result of his regression. As he regrets his action in the past, his mind starting to create a better yet false memory for him to be remembered, even creating a new identity for himself in his fantasy. As he keeps delusional and hallucinating, he started having a hard time differing the reality and the fantasy. His false memory becomes more and more comfortable for him to be remembered. It helps him get away from his memories that keep haunting him all this time. Andrew's id keeps wanting this pleasant feeling and getting free from guilt. His superego could not fight the id's desire that is already overpowering his mind, resulting on him becomes a schizophrenic. The hallucinations may occur in any sensory modality, but the most common case is in auditory hallucinations. It is usually experienced as

voices that have been perceived in someone's mind. In the novel, the auditory hallucinations were by far has the highest number of occurrences by the researcher, followed by visual hallucinations.

The story mainly follows Dr. Cawley's psychodrama as the treatment used in the attempt to heal Andrew's schizophrenia. As the psychosurgeries are considered as inhuman to the patient and can be concluded as not the best method in treating a schizophrenic patient. Psychodrama is performed to lead the patients into their fantasy, making a role-play as in their narrative world, then help them to realize and acknowledge their trauma, and to solve the problems by themselves. The purpose is to show them that what they believe as the reality is not real in order to lead them back to their common sense. The application of psychodrama also helps Andrew to have a social interaction especially by forming a close relationship with Chuck. Talking out a problem to other people is considered very important in the treatment of mental illnesses including schizophrenia. Another treatment used in the novel is the medication in the form of pills and cigarettes. The pills are continuously given to Andrew ever since he becomes schizophrenic to calm his emotion down from anxiety. The consumption of cigarettes is concluded as one of the compelling medications for patients with mental illness. It helps the patient to relax and diminish the level of anxiety.

Psychological Theory The literary analysis of the novel can be contemplated through the analysis of the main character that can be examined on the personality of the analysis of the main character that can be examined on the personality of the character or his thoughts and illusions. **Shutter Island Andrew's Psyche** The primary character in the novel of *Shutter Island* is portrayed as mentally disordered named Andrew Laeddis. Andrew in this novel has dual roles, one is the detective and the

other is the prisoner. Before he endures in psychosis, Andrew is a veteran of World War II. The United States who have been assigned against the Nazi in Dachau. From that point onward, he progressed toward becoming U.S marshal. Andrew has a wife named Dolores Channel and has three kids named Rachel, Henry and Simon they lived in a house close to the lake, after their stay at a flat. Actually, since the beginning, Andrew is a patient at the “mental rehabilitation center.”

It is known that Andrew is somebody who has a psychological problem. Andrew killed Dolores when he discovered that she drowned the kids in the lake. Andrew disregards the fact that his wife has depression and she is dangerous to be nearby the kids. In light of data given by Dr. Sheehan Andrew's essential therapist, that Andrew started to create a fictional character named Teddy after this incident to forget what he has done. Dolores placed her hand on his gun. He dumped his hand over hers “I need you to love me,” she said.” I need you to free me” (172). In Andrew dreamland, he is Teddy Daniels, U.S marshal who is assigned to explore a case in Ashecliffe, Asylum. As Teddy, there are still a few similarities with the genuine that he was veteran of World War II the US over conveyed against the Nazi in Dachau. Andrew likewise frames another anecdotal character, named Chuck Aule, Rachel Solando, George Noyce, and Andrew Laeddis. There are three wards in Ashecliffe hospital, ward A, ward B, and ward C. Prior to vanishing, Rachel used to live in ward B. Andrew trusts that Rachel is a piece of the puzzle. He searched for her then Andrew discovers Rachel in a cave and they talk together about the conspiracy that has occurred in Ashecliffe. Despite the fact that she does not exist and their discussion is just part of Andrew's illusion. Since Andrew proceeded with his fiction story and insisted on doing violence, Andrew Laeddis was considered to be number one in the

hospital to be healed. Andrew had a clash between id, ego and superego where he repressed the memories and decided to live in another story.

Hallucination and Schizophrenia Hallucination is the status of believing something is real while it does not exist in fact. Andrew Laeddis had “visual hallucination” and auditory as well. In a visual case the patient would see things or people do not exist, while in auditory, he/she would hear voices or imagining hearing voices from nowhere. "yes, [Dolores] bend her head back, look at him? You have known? Have not. Yes, you have, you can't leave." (89) In this dream, Andrew is talking to Dolores who helps him understand the disappearance of Rachel. Still, it is part of his hallucination. He imagined seeing and talking to Dolores though we know that she is dead. Another fictional character in Andrew's mind is the lost patient Rachel Solando who was hiding in a cave. When he met her there, Andrew was frightened, suspicious and curious. He was alone in that cave with no one but his mere fantasy. That was the visual part, the meeting and seeing Rachel, while the auditory is the conversation they had about the conspiracy and the patients who are dragged to the lighthouse tortured with a kind of brain surgery. However, the biggest fact in this conversation is when Rachel told Teddy that he does not have partners or friends. Then who is Chuck? Teddy: I had a friend. I was with him yesterday. But we got separated. Have you seen him? Rachel: marshal... you have no friends (131)

On many occasions, Andrew had hallucination in the form of seeing his wife and daughter in different sets. His wife tried to prevent him from going to the lighthouse and when he went there and discovered the truth, he saw them again there while the doctors tried to cure him. It is his unconscious infect that tells him: do not go because there in the lighthouse you will discover the tragedy of your life. Even the word “lighthouse” is symbolic. Usually, the lighthouse is used to lead the ships to the

way and the shore. Here this place led Andrew to find his lost self and to encounter his worst fears. The light here is in contrast with the darkness that surrounds Andrew. He needed it to see the truth.

According to Andrew's mental state, one may conclude that Andrew has a schizophrenia disorder though it is under regression. Regression is a kind of psychological escape; it is typically a moment when Andrew goes back in time before the tragedy happens. Therefore, the delusions, auditory and visual hallucinations are all a self-defense mechanism. He creates his fictional story where he is a detective wants to investigate a case in a mental hospital of Ashecliffe. In fact, he is one of the patients in Ashecliffe. In Andrew's case, the principles of Freud's psychoanalysis namely the id, ego, and superego are no longer functioning accurately. This is simply because of the status of regression Andrew's id controlled his mind so he tried to satisfy it by creating the character of the US marshal who was trying to solve a mystery. Here in this story, he is the hero who had never been but the problem grows into believing that he is Andrew not Teddy and this is the beginning of schizophrenia. The problem with Andrew's superego is that it neither controls the id nor distinguishes the right from the wrong. What seems right is in fact wrong and vice versa. For example, when he injected Dr. Naehring with a syringe, he thought it was self-defense because he thought it was a poison or something similar and not a sedative as it was in real.

The superego is depicted in the doctors and his psychiatrists who tried to show Andrew his reality. When Andrew lost Chuck in the cliffs, Dr. Cawley told him that all this is an illusion, there is no Chuck and Andrew is in fact alone. Chuck is nobody except his own doctor Dr. Sheehan. Dr. Sheehan and Dr Cawley worked as Andrew's superego and tried to give him clues on his true identity. Then Dr. Cowely

started telling Andrew about some of his fictional characters such as Rachel Solando and Teddy Daniels. Dr. Cawely clarifies that Rachel Solando is Dolores Channel which means Andrew's wife and Teddy Daniels is Andrew Laeddis, both names are an anagram. An anagram is a word or phrase formed by reordering the letters of a different word or phrase, using all the original letters once.

It was an unintentional mechanism of self-defense used by Andrew's ego to protect himself from his past and harsh truth. It was a way to escape from himself. However, his ego refused to believe the truth about his identity, and that led him to live in a state of psychosis where reality and fantasy are the same. When finally, Andrew discovered the truth, he decided to use another way to escape from his reality, to go under the process of lobotomy which is mentioned again and again throughout the novel. Though we never see the procedure performed, and never meet a character who has been lobotomized, it seems as a kind of punishment, a fate worse than death, where the patient who has undergone it is trapped in their own body, unable to act or speak. The procedure is an act of maleficent cruelty disguised as a scientific and even humanitarian act. For Andrew, this process is the mercy bullet better than living as a monster. Conclusion Andrew Laeddis killed Teddy's wife Dolores with apparently no motive. He is the mysterious untraceable prisoner that Teddy is searching for. However, Teddy did not know that he was searching for himself. All the three children are dead, drowned by Dolores whose mental illness has taken over completely. She thinks that after killing their children, the bodies will be her living dolls. Andrew is devastated. Overwhelmed by guilt and anger, he shot his wife and killed her. Now he is completely alone, his entire family is dead. After this tragic accident happened, Andrew cannot live a single day without guilt. He assumed that the death of his children is indirectly happened as the consequences of his regretful

decision. This becomes the break that leads Andrew to possess schizophrenia. It rises as Andrew could not face his reality and instead creating an alternate reality. Even from the very beginning, it can be seen how much Andrew blocks specific things in reality that are connected to his family's death. The writer concludes that Andrew entangled mental illness because of his unresolved conflict between the id, ego, and superego as the result of his trauma. Then it repressed into his unconscious mind, causing the rises of regression of him making an alternate reality of his earlier stages of life.

Teddy and Andrew are one person and schizophrenia was the solution because he could not accept the reality that he killed his wife after she murdered their three children. The dialogue between Chuck and Andrew at the end of the novel is so important his family and ignoring his wife's mental illness that later led to murder their children and then murder her. He finds difficulties in accepting the truth that he is the monster who killed his wife and he is also responsible for his children's death, so he decided to continue living in Shutter Island in peace. Lobotomy was the solution to escape from the ugly truth. He cannot live with his crimes and would prefer to lie to his doctor as he knows this will result in his lobotomy. Andrew's statement makes us wonder if he is really insane or act like insane especially if such wise words are coming out of him. But what we know is that he has chosen to be insane and live as a good man better than keeping his sanity and living with his worst fear. These psychological conflicts of the protagonist is manifested in the form of symbols in the novel. The next chapter deals with symbols as structure.

Chapter Four

Symbols as Structure

The setting of the story can mean many things besides the obvious where it takes place include the location, the background, and the regional aspect. It can designate a particular time, and historical era, a political situation. From the setting of the story, we know the beginning of the story set and setting also affects what the characters do. The novel was stated that the setting is not only a particular time and a particular place, or a very substance of a region, but also how the people things, how they react, their prejudices, their insanities, and their lifestyle with all elements that related indirectly.

Setting includes the background aspect of atmosphere, a series of details, nuances which give a certain shape to theme and plot. In other setting is usually integrated into other aspects in a story, into plot, theme, character, and philosophical implication. *Shutter Island* is a thriller written in 2003 by Dennis Lehane. It set in the summer of 1954, with memories of World War Two still fresh, the novel follows U.S. Marshal Teddy Daniels as he travels to Shutter Island, the location of Ashecliffe Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Assigned a new partner, Chuck Aule, Teddy is ostensibly investigating the disappearance of a patient, but is also investigating rumors of Ashecliffe use of controversial radical treatments.

The *Shutter Island* has an intriguing and exceptionally intricate plot and the reader is confronted by two equally plausible conclusions at the end. The novel deals in depth with different psychiatric conditions and disorders, including pure psychopathy, delusions and bipolar disorder. In order to write the novel, Lehane researched psychiatry and mental illness in depth and credits three books in particular for his research *Mad in America* by Robert Whittaker, *Gracefully Insane* by Alex

Beam, and Boston Harbor Islands by Emily and David Kale. Unlike Lehane's other works which take place in the Boston area and deal with many of the social issues facing the poor white residents of Southie and Dorchester like child abuse, gentrification, and drugs *Shutter Island* takes place off the coast of Boston, and in the past. Nonetheless, throughout the novel, Lehane draws on Boston's history, including its past in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, as well as the military's use of islands off the coast of Massachusetts as target practice for shelling in the Pacific Theater. Boston's tense racial history, too, is also reflected in the island's staff.

The *Shutter Island* was national bestseller, and, after the success Lehane's *Mystic River*, led to even greater national exposure for the author. Lehane wrote several episodes for the HBO series "The Wire" soon after, and in 2010, *Shutter Island* was turned into a film by Martin Scorsese, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Mark Ruffalo. The novel opens with a journal entry by Dr. Lester Sheehan, dated May 3, 1993. Sheehan expresses the desire to set down his memories about his time as a doctor at Ashecliffe Hospital on Shutter Island now that he is close to death, and his memory is going. He compares memories to bookmarks in a book, and he fears that they're fluttering away.

The concentration camp at Dachau is referred to throughout the novel and is a constant motif. Teddy was one of the soldiers involved in the liberation of the camp and seems to have been haunted ever since by images of the prisoners there. He makes a comparison between the expressionless eyes of the Dachau prisoners and the patients on Shutter Island, and this is also a comparison between the brutal "experiments" carried out by the Nazis and the experimental treatment being given on the island. Dachau was a pivotal point in Teddy's life as after having participated in

the shooting of SS guards who perpetrated the atrocities, he vowed only to kill in self-defense in the future.

The logs left on the beach by Rachel, and said by Dr. Cawley to be seen in Teddy's nightmares, are a symbol of the three murdered children, either Rachel's or Teddy's. When Teddy saw the logs floating in the lake, he did not immediately realize that they were not logs at all but the bodies of his children. Each time the logs are seen on the island, they symbolize the children's bodies in the lake. The bad sailor is a metaphor for being both a bad son and a bad parent. As a boy, Teddy was literally a bad sailor, suffering terrible sea sickness, which in turn made him think of himself as a bad son because he had not lived up to his father's expectations. Metaphorically, he was a "bad sailor" as a parent in that he failed to protect his children from their mother's madness. Every time he sees the words "bad sailor" on his headstone in his nightmares he believes that this will be what he is actually remember According to Dr. Cawley's version of events, Rachel is a symbol of Teddy's wife Dolores Chanal. Not only is Rachel Solando's name an anagram of Dolores', but she also symbolizes Dolores' crimes. Teddy is in able to come to terms with what his wife did so Rachel symbolizes her in his delusion for.

Teddy dreams that Dolores, his father, a soldier with whom he served by the name of Tootie Vicelli, and Chuck are all together in a kitchen with their coats on hooks by the door. At the end of the dream, Chuck takes his coat from the same hook that the other characters have done, which Teddy believes is symbolic of the fact that Chuck, who is currently missing, is actually dead, as all of the other characters in the dream are dead. Through psychologically expressive and symbolic used to exemplify the tone and meaning of *Shutter Island*. The setting of *Shutter Island* drastically reflects Daniels' character. The setting of the novel being an insane asylum can be

perceived as symbolic towards Daniels' mental illness it is dark, complex, and has many layers. Also, the location of the asylum being on an island is symbolic of Daniels' loneliness and immobilization.

The symbolism of Shutter Island's setting is immensely affected by water. In the opening scene of the book, it is made apparent that Daniels is terrified and unable to cope with water, which makes his escape from the island seem impossible. His subconscious phobia of water could be associated with the death of his children, which supports a subconscious association of water to reality. Water is a frequent aspect to the settings in this book the storm could symbolize "reality" trapping Daniels on the island until he discovers the truth. Just as the use of water in the setting of Shutter Island symbolizes reality, the use of fire as a form of lighting is used to convey the hallucinations and delusions of Daniels in waking life as well as dreams.

Therefore, Scorsese accompanies Daniels' hallucinations and delusions with fire to symbolize that they are illusions. For example, when Daniels and the "real" Rachel are talking in the cave, their only source of light is the campfire. This implies that the "real" Rachel was an illusion. Also, in the dream sequence of Daniels and Laeddis, the prominent light source is the fireplace, suggesting that Daniels' perception of Laeddis does not exist. Again, fire is used as the main source of light during the conversation between Nobles and Daniels. Not only does Daniels hallucinate Delores in this scene, but he misinterprets the conversation he has with Nobles which further supports Daniels' insanity. The book is a labyrinth of intertwining narratives that tie together for an amazing plot twist. The idea of representing physiological instability is such an interesting concept. The symbols used to portray the idea of delusions and an unstable mentality are extremely effective and inspiring.

During the novel, Hurricane Carol, which struck the East Coast in 1954, is bearing down on Shutter Island. Lehane uses the image of the hurricane to create a wide variety of psychological effects to evoke the feeling of something ominous looming. In the eye of the hurricane, the weather is eerie, still, and charged. When it is raging, as when Teddy and Chuck are in the mausoleum and they witness a tree fly by them upside down, it evokes unchecked natural rage. The hurricane evokes a natural world of violence and malevolence.

Many of the characters allude to the fear of being destroyed in nuclear war. Litchfield, the patient that Teddy and Chuck encounter in Ward C, gleefully describes the hydrogen bomb, which implodes on itself. Teddy recalls Dolores, in turn, having been made anxious by the news of the escalating arms race between American and Russia. The repeated mentions of nuclear annihilation suggest that the madness of Shutter Island is not limited to the island, but has gripped the world itself, and that at any moment everything could collapse or be destroyed. The repeated mentions of the atomic and hydrogen bomb create a claustrophobic feeling, as though there is no way out from the violence whose memories haunt Teddy.

The novel begins with the image of Teddy on his father's fishing boat, overwhelmed by the vastness of the ocean. The image of the ocean vast, unfathomable, insurmountable, filled with slimy, disgusting creatures evokes a feeling of vertigo, weakness, and sickness that hangs over the entire novel. It ultimately stands in for Teddy's relationship to the world itself, as something gigantic, overwhelming and inhuman.

In virtually every scene the novel underscores just how heavily guarded Ashecliffe is. Lehane mentions bars, guards with batons, electric fencing and barbed wire, and the jagged cliffs that surround the island. To go anywhere on the island,

Teddy and Chuck have to be escorted and pass-through security. The imagery underscores the overwhelming desolation of the island and the hopelessness of the patients there, contrasting sharply against humanitarian mission that Dr. Cawley and Warden McPherson cheerfully describe.

The trans orbital lobotomy is mentioned again and again throughout the novel, though we never see the procedure performed and never encounter a character who has been lobotomized. The procedure hangs over the entire novel as the ultimate punishment, a fate worse than death, effectively trapping the person who has undergone it in their own body, unable to act or speak. The procedure is meant to be doubly horrifying because it is an act of wanton cruelty disguised as a scientific and even humanitarian act. Unlike the violence that Teddy is used to, it is icy, clinical, removed.

In the novel, Teddy reveals to Chuck that part of the reason he is on the island is at the behest of a New Hampshire senator, to ascertain whether experiments are being carried out on human beings at the direction of the government, in violation of the Nuremberg Code. This plot refers allusively to the MKUltra experiments, a secret project carried out by the Chief Intelligence Agency-CIA.

The novel began in 1953, and was only officially stopped in the 1970s, when it was brought to public attention by the Church Committee. Like Dr. Cawley, the book had humanitarian aspirations. Conceived of as a defense of liberal democracy, in its initial phases, it was designed to test under what circumstances individuals could be brought about to abandon their core beliefs. Soon, the CIA began to use the experiments to test the effectiveness of various chemicals, including LSD, as a truth serum. On several occasions, the drug was given to unsuspecting people to test its results. When it became public knowledge in the 1970s, MKUltra permanently

tarnished the public's perception of the CIA, giving rise to the present perception of it as a shadowy, all-powerful, unscrupulous organization pursuing its own ends without government oversight.

The flashes of white light are used when Teddy has any dream or flashbacks. These are used to show that these are not representing reality. They relate back to the theme of exploring reality. They are showing that there is something wrong or distorted in his memories. This is one of the film techniques that are subtle enough that the audience may not pick it up on their first viewing.

Shutter Island is a mind about a protagonist who believes he is a federal marshal sent to find a missing person at the prison. In reality, however, Teddy Daniels is a patient at the institute for the criminally insane. The story follows Daniels as he tries to uncover clues about the missing person and he believes he discovered illegal surgical procedures that are done on the patients. In the end, however, Daniels is told that he is a patient and that if he cannot grasp that idea, extreme measures will have to be taken. The novel ends with the audience questioning if Daniels really knows about his condition as he gives himself in to the doctor to be given mental treatment.

The setting of the novel creaking of the doors and the dripping of the leaking water onto the floor. The room is mainly black and dark with a few patches of light coming through from the ceiling. The chiaroscuro highlights the fact that Daniels is figuratively in the dark, meaning that he is not aware of the true happenings or who he actually is. The patches of light on the floor before him symbolize that as he figuratively moves forward, he will discover more about himself and eventually become enlightened, thus foreshadowing the future gain of knowledge. As Daniels does step into the light patches, the point of view shifts and sees the faces of Daniels and Chuck.

The correlation of the light now on the characters symbolizes the closer proximity to truth. The book dollies in once again on the doors at the end of the hall, with the again absence of until the creaking of the doors is heard. As Daniels slowly opens the doors, his face is in the dark, or shaded part of the book, while the partner and doctor's face is lit up by the overhead light. Symbolically, this represents how Chuck is aware of the condition of Daniels, and even though Daniels is getting closer to knowing, he is still unknowing of his internal struggle.

Suddenly, the loudness and pitch increase as another character appears out of the shadows. Daniels begins chasing the other character down the halls and into the dark. In order to increase intensity, the main character that can be heard are the footsteps of the characters running and the no diegetic of a chain being pulled in the background. Because the hallway is dark, the novel pays even more attention to the other senses such as sounds. The novel angles down to the floor to see the feet of the other character, who Daniels thinks is Laeddis, scampering down the hallway. The juxtaposition of the red blood on the black background creates a sense of fear.

Daniels then steps into what seems to be a maze of pathways and stairs. Shutter Island shows an overhead view and then jump cuts to an even higher up aerial. This novel movement demonstrates the overwhelming feeling that Daniels experiences as he steps into an unknown maze that he cannot seem to find his way through. Also, because the Shutter Island is above Daniels and thus is performing a high-angle shot, Daniels can be seen as inferior and vulnerable. Not only is he vulnerable to the person who he is chasing, but he is also vulnerable to his mental state, which seems to have taken over his daily life.

As Daniels walks along the pathway through the maze of staircases, from the other side of the fence, making it seem as if Daniels is caged in. Symbolically, he is

caged in by his inability to interpret the real world surrounding him. It is significant to notice that as Daniels steps into the light, he is attacked by who he thinks is Laeddis. Because Daniels actually is Laeddis, the external fight between the two characters parallels the internal struggle between Daniels' two believed identities. The novel into Daniel's feet as he is dragged up the stairs by Laeddis. Not only does this demonstrate how the internal struggle is getting the best of Daniels, but it also demonstrates how Laeddis has the upper hand in the fight. The novel as Daniels is pulled represents Laeddis' superiority and also the fact that Laeddis has more knowledge and insight into the situation.

As Laeddis grasps Daniels in a head-lock, they both press up against the shadowed, grated wall, escaping the light, and Laeddis begins dialogue about how he never wants to leave the prison. Because both characters are in the dark, the mental instability of both characters is demonstrated. The novel in at this point to a close up on Laeddis and Daniels' character. This character in action correlates with the fact that Daniels is coming closer to the realization of who he is and what he is doing. The nondiegetic the scene of the screeching of metal adds to the intensity of the scene and could be interpreted to represent the confusion of information in Daniels 'mind as he tries to interpret his surroundings. When Laeddis speaks about the hydrogen bomb blowing up at the thousandth degree, the book flash scene to a dollied-out position, and does it once more to a more aerial as Laeddis says the hydrogen bomb blows up at the millionth degree. The novel deal with the diegetic, demonstrating how the mental processes of Daniels are beginning to line up.

Daniels then begins to physically fight Laeddis after getting out of the grip of the head-lock, which demonstrates how Daniels is fighting his mental conditions and trying to conquer his mental state. The novel shows Daniels hurting Laeddis,

portraying the sudden superiority of Daniels. The switch of positions of the characters allows Daniels to be within the light and Laeddis to be in the shadowed part of the frame.

The implausible escape of a brilliant murderess brings U.S. Marshal Teddy Daniels and his new partner to Ashecliffe Hospital, a fortress-like insane asylum located on a remote, windswept island. The woman appears to have vanished from a locked room, and there are hints of terrible deeds committed within the hospital walls. As the investigation deepens, Teddy realizes he will have to confront his own dark fears if he hopes to make it off the island alive.

The morning after the hurricane, the power goes out, and Teddy and Chuck take the opportunity to sneak into the restricted Ward C, where the most dangerous patients are incarcerated. Teddy believes he might find Laeddis there; instead, he finds a severely beaten prisoner named Noyce, who had previously given Teddy information about the experiments that were being conducted in the island's lighthouse.

This shifts the conflict on a number of levels. For one thing, it represents a significant shift in Teddy's mental state—as represented symbolically by his manic lighting of matches which he avoided lighting in the first half of the movie, presumably because of the connection to the arsonist Laeddis and the fire that killed his wife. It also presents new information about the lighthouse, giving Teddy a new goal and a way to move forward actively, instead of just reacting.

Teddy believes Chuck has fallen to his death off the rocks. He climbs down, but finds no body. Instead, he enters a cave and finds the woman prisoner who disappeared in the beginning. She tells him she was originally a doctor on the island, but that she was imprisoned when she tried to speak out against the prison's practices.

She warns him the doctors will try to commit Teddy himself. This is the moment where Teddy shifts into full-blown panic over the danger in which he now finds himself.

Teddy infiltrates the lighthouse in search of Chuck only to discover no sign of experiments. Instead, he is told by the head doctor that he is a patient, that he is Andrew Laeddis, and that his partner Chuck was really another doctor role-playing in an attempt to break through Teddy's false reality. Not only does this offer a delightful horde of revelations, it also pushes the main character to a perfectly personalized low point. What could possibly be worse than having your goal of escaping incarceration be thwarted by the realization that you're already incarcerated for insanity? Teddy/Andrew finally remembers that his wife burned their apartment and drowned their three children—and that he shot her.

The *Shutter Island* ends with a 180-degree rotation from an overhead perspective. This portrays that even after Daniels feels he is gaining knowledge; he still is confused about many things and his brain is still in the unstable state. Symbolically, because of the suspense and surprises that not only frighten Daniels but also frighten the audience as well, the audience can identify and sympathize with Daniels as he mentally struggles. The cinematography allows for the audience to feel the situations as Daniels would feel them, and the audience can thus understand that it is experiencing the events with Daniels.

Chapter Five

Summation

Shutter Island, a novel by Dennis Lehane follows Andrew Laeddis as the main character who is a schizophrenic patient. He unconsciously develops the mental illness as the result of the traumatic experiences. There are several events in the past that lead him to build anxiety such as his guilt of killing hundreds of unarmed armies in World War II, the guilt of not taking Dolores to the psychiatrist, but the most painful memory for him is the death of his family.

Andrew's schizophrenia in the novel follows his delusional thoughts where he believes himself as a man called Teddy Daniels who is in a mission with his new partner, Chuck Aule, to investigate a missing patient case named Rachel Solando. His unconscious mind created a new identity for him and people around him because it cannot withstand the pain from his trauma. As he develops the anxiety and depression, his three functions of personality in his mind, the id, the ego, and the superego, could not work cooperatively as the normal people do. As the result, as a schizophrenic patient.

Andrew's id becomes dominant and most of the time, it takes control of the ego. His superego is hardly performed in the story. However, there is one time he performed his superego as he persisted in looking and saving for Chuck while he knows the danger of lingering around the island that he already believes as the place that performs human experiments. Andrew who could not bear to accept the reality unconsciously performs defense mechanism. His defense mechanisms are formed as the way his mind try to escape the reality and are carried out along with his schizophrenia. There are three types of defense mechanism performed by him which are regression, projection, displacement, and denial.

The story mainly follows Dr. Cawley's psychodrama as the treatment used in the attempt to heal Andrew's schizophrenia. As the psychosurgeries are considered as inhuman to the patient and can be concluded as not the best method in treating a schizophrenic patient. Psychodrama is performed to lead the patients into their fantasy, making a role-play as in their narrative world, then help them to realize and acknowledge their trauma, and to solve the problems by themselves.

The purpose is to show them that what they believe as the reality is not real in order to lead them back to their common sense. The application of psychodrama also helps Andrew to have a social interaction especially by forming a close relationship with Chuck. Talking out a problem to other people is considered very important in the treatment of mental illnesses including schizophrenia. Another treatment used in the novel is the medication in the form of pills and cigarettes. The pills are continuously given to Andrew ever since he becomes schizophrenic to calm his emotion down from anxiety.

The consumption of cigarettes is concluded as one of the compelling medications for patients with mental illness. It helps the patient to relax and diminish the level of anxiety. Andrew Laeddis killed Teddy's wife Dolores with apparently no motive. He is the mysterious untraceable prisoner that Teddy is searching for. However, Teddy did not know that he was actually searching for himself.

Teddy and Andrew are one person and schizophrenia was the solution because he could not accept the reality that he killed his wife after she murdered their three children. The dialogue between Chuck and Andrew at the end of the novel is so important, which would be the worse: "To live as a monster, or to die as a good man?" these words given us a signed of his guilt, telling us about the fact of ignoring his family and ignoring his wife's mental illness that later led to murder their children

and then murder her. He finds difficulties in accepting the truth that he is the monster who killed his wife and he is also responsible for his children's death, so he decided to continue living in Shutter Island in peace.

Lobotomy was the solution to escape from the ugly truth. He cannot live with his crimes and would prefer to lie to his doctor as he knows this will result in his lobotomy. Andrew's statement makes us wonder if he is really insane or act like insane especially if such wise words are coming out of him. But what we know is that he has chosen to be insane and live as a good man better than keeping his sanity and living with his worst fear.

In *Shutter Island*, Dennis Lehane adopts a third-person point of view to narrate the story of Andrew Laeddis alias Edward Daniels/Teddy and explores the issue of mental illness, specifically psychological trauma. Throughout the plot, the author displays the mental disintegration of the protagonist as well as the causes and the effects of this psychic decadence. It has provided an insight into Shutter Island to progressively conduct to the analysis of the protagonist. This work is logically organized and has started from an overall introduction of the historical context to a deeper examination of the main character.

This dissertation has shown how trauma and guilt are related and how their impact on the protagonist's psyche is important through his hallucinations and the interpretation of his dreams. The different effects of his mental illness and the coping mechanisms that he has developed have been demonstrated and thoroughly studied.

Teddy developed denial of his reality as a defense mechanism and created a fantasy and an alter-ego, but he found himself unable to overcome this stage and this is what impacted and hampered his grief process. Besides, he was unaware of his own denial and his condition led to amnesia. In addition to denial, he adopted repression to

cope with the shock trauma that he had been subjected to and from which he could not escape, he surrendered to the calamity of the situation, for he could not change nor control anything. Following that, the return of the repressed acted upon the protagonist's unconscious and memories of the traumatic episode kept coming back and recurring in his dreams and hallucinations.

Andrew Laeddis constructed another personality that resulted from his idealized version of himself. Edward Daniels is an anagram of his own name and is a respected marshal and the heroic figure of an ex-veteran of the Second World War. His attachment to this ideal ego inhibited his acceptance of reality and his real self, and the protagonists' antagonistic relationship with his second person and his will to get rid of him was driven by his unconscious desire to purge himself and clear his conscience.

In addition to the coping mechanisms and the psychological effects of trauma upon the protagonist, the psychoanalytic study has allowed to pinpoint the connectedness of guilt and the role it played in his mental affliction. During the analysis, it has been concluded that although the feeling of guilt is rather normal in usual times, in the case of Teddy, it became neurotic due to its repression that intensified his trauma and worsened his condition.

As repression tends to return, his unconscious remorse manifested through dreams, besides, the kind of guilt he suffered from was survivor guilt since he felt culpable for the death of his family and considered himself as a father who had not been able to save his children and a husband who had not paid enough attention to his manic depressive wife. Overall, we have noticed the convergence of these elements and their interaction as well as their impact on one another, and it is this combination that led to the regression of his mind. As a psychological novel, it was imperative to

study *Shutter Island* under a psychoanalytic perspective and by adopting this literary theory for the analysis, we have been able not only to show the effects of trauma but also to examine each characteristic of this disease on the protagonist mainly the sense of guilt and their entanglement. And through his Gothic-inspired writing style and his intriguing plot, Dennis Lehane knew how to effectively transpose psychological notions into his literary work.

The events constituting the plot starting chronologically with the entrance of two US marshals to the asylum, investigating an escape case of a patient, flashbacks to a wife he cherished beyond words, hunting for a cold-blooded murderer, decoding various codes, searching for a patient 67, facing the truly missing patient, the thought of being drugged by the shrinks, and endeavoring to end the evil experiments carried out in the lighthouse are not but delusions and hallucinations of Andrew's mind via which the whole plot was arrayed, not to mention the fictitious or fake characters such as Chuck, Solando, Laeddis, and Noyce who aptly filled the slots delusively carved out by Andrew. What truly renders the ground apt for the above-cited path of mentality to start breathing is the traumatic life of Andrew whose traumas were explained in detail. So, judging by the face of matters, is the entire plot a delusion too? This is the very question whose answer might be as vague as the reasons why some *Shutter Island* critics, after being provided with all the evidence targeted at substantiation of the insanity and psychosis of Andrew, still assert that he is utterly sane and nothing goes amiss in regards to his mentality that it is all a set up against Andrew. Perhaps, the least of odds will go in such critics' favor once all the material scribbled above, particularly the reliability of role play psychiatry as mentioned earlier, is taken earnestly into account, yet the question who knows? might, in lack of better terms, serve our purpose of not taking an absolute side in abstract and

subjective realms, leaving it more open-endedly than the way Shutter Island faded to the mist of its end.

The main character is Andrew Laeddis. He is described as a patient from mental institution named Ashecliffe in Shutter Island who has some of own identifying features. Those are the specific descriptions. All his traits are the traits which indicate him suffered from trauma. All his traits are being person who suffered from rebound headache, who often got nightmare, who often got flashback, who had grieving reaction, who was prone to be angry, who scared of water, who got sleeping trouble and also who was bad in concentrating. Andrew Laeddis also experiences both kind of internal and external conflict.

All his internal conflicts are remembering his deceased wife, being confused on two realities about the existence of his partner, being shocked by the coming back of missing patient and being betrayed by his partner's real identity. Moreover, Andrew also has several external conflicts. Those are Andrew against Dr. Cawley, Andrew against Dr. Jeremiah Naehring, Andrew against guards, Andrew against George Noyce and Andrew against Chuck Aule. Settings are divided into setting of place and setting of time.

The setting of place is dominant than the others. The setting of place is in Shutter Island's area but mostly in the Ashecliffe itself. Those are ferry, Shutter Island's dock, Rachel Solando's room, Dr. Cawley's house, Men's dormitory, Cafeteria, Breezeway, Cemetery, Mausoleum, Basement of the staff dormitory, Boardroom, Dr. Cawley's office, Dr. Cawley secret room, Ward C and Cave. In another hand, the settings of time are afternoon, evening, night but mostly in the morning.

The trauma of Andrew Laeddis has causes and effect. The causes of his trauma are his action of knowing his wife, Dolores, was insane until she was able to killed their own three children by drowned them in the lake without regrets and his action of killing Dolores upon her personal request because she wanted to free from her insanity. As the result, he was sent to Ashecliffe. After that, Andrew could not live with the reality so he made a complex fictitious narrative as a denial response of the truth in Ashecliffe and it became the effect of his trauma. By the helps of Ashecliffe's staff, he staged his fictitious narrative for two years before. Like a wheel, his fictitious narrative always played repeatedly and the lighthouse always became the place where Andrew got all the truths. His fictitious complex narrative had three kinds of plot in one line.

The first, he became a U.S. Marshall named "Edward Teddy Daniels" who handled a missing patient named Rachel Solando. He ran the case with his new partner named "Chuck Aule". In fact, "Chuck Aule" was his primary psychiatrist for two years in Ashecliffe named Dr. Lester Sheehan. The second plot, still as a U.S Marshal named Teddy Daniels, he was looking for a man named "Andrew Laeddis".

Andrew believed the one killed Dolores was a man named "Andrew Laeddis". According to him, that man killed Dolores by burning their apartment. In fact, the guy named "Andrew Laeddis" was himself. The one who killed Dolores was himself. He could not believe that reality so he made such a story to convince him that he was not a Dolores' killer his trial to reveal some conspiracy about radical surgery in Shutter Island. According to his fictitious narrative, Andrew met a guy named Senator Hurly, the man who was funding Ashecliffe. Senator Hurly knew that his money did not used well in there and he thought there was something wrong with Ashecliffe. So, he asked Andrew to gather some information and revealed the conspiracy in Ashecliffe. The

truth, Senator Hurly was just a fictitious character which made by Andrew who did not existed.

Only Teddy is not a real person but a delusion created by inmate Andrew Laeddis. The ending of “Shutter Island” reveals that DiCaprio's character is a patient himself, committed to the Shutter Island facility after murdering his wife because she went insane and killed their children. The book concludes with the revelation that Teddy Daniels is actually an alternate persona constructed by a Shutter Island inmate named Andrew Laeddis. In fact, the entire investigation was an elaborate ruse, designed to rattle Laeddis to the extent that he puts his Daniels persona to rest. In the final scene, as Laeddis sits with his doctor, it becomes clear that he has once again lapsed into his Daniels persona, essentially sentencing himself to a lobotomy. Overall, Shutter Island is a wonderful psychological thriller, packed with suspense and very difficult for the reader to put down. Shutter Island is a tale full of cryptic and puzzling clues, shocking twists, and horrifying revelations.

The novel ends with spoiler alert US Marshall Teddy Daniels realizing he is an alternate persona his real self, former US Marshall Andrew Laeddis, constructed to deal with the guilt and pain associated with his wife murdering their three children and then, after discovering her deed, him murdering his wife. In fact, the entire investigation for the missing patient was an elaborate ploy put on by the doctors at Shutter Island to rid Laeddis of his demons and avoid a lobotomy. The book ends with Laeddis again assuming his alternate moniker and mind of Teddy Daniels and seemingly headed towards the unavoidable lobotomy.

Shutter Island is a literary work that mirrors the McCarthy era it was set in, and depicts the same atmosphere of suspicion and instability. Dennis Lehane when writing this novel chose to base his themes on the deterioration of the mind and the

self, but he also wanted the readers to understand the hidden message behind it and his motives. *Shutter Island* is not only the story of Andrew Laeddis, but it is also a reflection of the deterioration of society that history had witnessed in the past and that still does today, and it seems like the story repeats itself, just like Teddy's repetitive dreams. This novel offers a peculiar perspective of the self, of History, and pushes the readers to raise questions and to develop their critical thinking.

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Journey of the Self through the Magical land of Primoria in Sara Raasch's *Snow Like Ashes* Trilogy

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

SHANMUGA PRIYADHARSHINI. N

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PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

April 2021

CONTENT

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Identity Crisis	11
Three	Characteristics of Epic Fantasy	21
Four	The Hero's	
Journey		34
Five	Summation	45
	Works Cited	51

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Journey of the Self through the Magical land of Primoria in Sara Raasch's *Snow Like Ashes* Trilogy** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Shanmuga Priyadharshini. N during the year 2019-2021,

and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Ms. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Dr. N. Sumathi

Guide

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Journey of the Self through the Magical land of Primoria in Sara Raasch's *Snow Like Ashes* Trilogy** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

SHANMUGA PRIYADHARSHINI. N

April 2021

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Journey of the Self through the Magical land of Primoria in Sara Raasch's *Snow Like Ashes*** Trilogy highlights the protagonist's journey of self in Sara Raasch's novels. It leads to the realisation that a person is capable of two or more identities.

The first chapter **Introduction** throws lights on Modern American Literature, the genres of young adult and fantasy novels. It also places Sara Raasch in the young American adult literature

The second chapter **Identity Crisis** deals with the protagonist's quest for identity and the hurdles she confronted while achieving it.

The third chapter **Characteristics of Epic Fantasy** focuses on the epical and the Magical elements existent in the series *Snow Like Ashes*.

The fourth chapter **The Hero's Journey** centers on the journey of the hero through the concept of monomyth proposed by John Campbell.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the aspects dealt in the previous chapters and presents the researcher's findings.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SLA – *Snow Like Ashes*

ILF – *Ice Like Fire*

FLN – *Frost Like Night*

HTF – *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*

Chapter One

Introduction

American Literature initially began when the country was under the colonization of the British. The Native Americans who lived before the arrival of the British transmitted their myth, songs, and legends orally. In *The History of American Literature* Ruben Post Halleck states:

The literature produced in that part of America known as the United States did not begin as an independent literature. The early colonists were Englishmen who brought with them their own language, books, and modes of thought. England had a world-famous literature before her sons established a permanent settlement across the Atlantic. (9)

After the arrival of the British, they brought with them their language, books, and style, and with that, the precise history of American Literature emerged. Since American literature began from British literature, at an early age the writers followed the English way and style of writing. For nearly two hundred years after the arrival of the colonizer, the majority of books read were written by English authors. As years passed around the nineteenth century, American writers started to whither out the style of the British and brought out their authentic style in their work.

In the years close to the 18th century, dramas and novels of great importance were written. In America, many theatrical groups have been actively running from long back but professionally the first American comedy presented was Royall Tyler's *Contrast*. The drama *Contrast* was full of the shadow of Goldsmith and Sheridan but the use of Yankee characters brought the native feel to the stage. Likewise, the first American novel published is William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* in 1789. Brown showed the authors, the way to overcome the prejudices by following the sentimental form which was invented by Samuel Richardson.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the writers of America turned their focus towards naturalism. The works of Henry James took a different pathway. Like the realists of his time, James also wanted to reproduce reality in his novels. Theodore Herman Albert Dreiser's novels like *Sister Carrie*, *Jennie Gerhardt*, *Trilogy of Desire*, and *An American Tragedy* portray the characters who were defeated by stronger and brutal opponents. Nella Larsen includes the harsh portraits of dark coloured middle class people in her novels *Quicksand* and *Passing*.

The uprise of feminism in the 1970s brought out many new women writers such as Rita Mae Brown, Erica Jong, etc. The novels of Richard Russo such as *Risk Pool*, *Nobody's Fool*, *Empire Falls*, and *That Old Cap* have good sense of humour and are minutely detailed. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the liberalization of immigration restrictions in America created a platform for rich multicultural writings. E.L Doctorow mixed the genres of history and fiction in his novels *The Waterworks* and *The March*.

In the twenty first century, the plight and experience of the immigrants in America are featured in the works of writers like Gary Shteyngart and Lara Vapnyar. The identity of Native Americans is also explored in novels like *Ceremony*, *Love Medicine*, *The Beet Queen*, and *The Antelope Wife*. Grish Jen shows the frustration and striving of the immigrants in his novel *Typical American*. The multicultural works of the immigrants made remarkable contributions to American Literature.

The twenty first century saw the hype of manga novels and mythologies were converted into graphic novels to build an interest among the budding young readers. Some famous manga and graphic novels that attracted the readers are Sherrilyn Kenyon's *Dark Hunter* Manga series, Ellen Schreiber's *Vampire Kisses: Blood Relatives series*, Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*, Cassandra Clare's *City of Bones*, etc. The twenty first century saw an increase in fantasy novels along with

manga and graphic novels. Some notable writers in the genre of Fantasy are Stephenie Meyer, Cassandra Clare, Rick Riordan, etc.

Contemporary American literature differs much from early American literature. It has crossed many ages and undergone an immense level of development. With writers like Alice Walker, William Faulkner, and Toni Morrison. American Literature has grown to a greater level than it challenges the British in the field of literature. Since twentieth century prose fiction has been admired more by the people. It is much complex and more approachable than the early writers. Modern writers differ in various aspects when compared to their ancestors. Many fresh and new genres have been evolved throughout the ages like science fiction, detective novels, comics, etc. and the genre of a young adult is one of them.

The genre Young Adult literature reflects the changes in society as well as induces a certain level of reactions from its adolescent readers so undeniably it qualifies as a literary genre. This genre became so popular after the publication of J.K Rowling's *Harry Potter* and Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* saga. From the early 21st century many young adults and middle aged readers have become the major audience. The readers did not seem to care about the branding of the author or publications and read both the bestselling novels and the first time novelists who write for the younger audience.

The history of contemporary young adult fiction can be traced back to the period of the 1950s and 1960s chiefly after the publication of S.E Hinton's *The Outsider*. Instead of the memories and nostalgic tones that were considered as typical young adult fiction during those days, it brought out the darker and unexplored side of adolescent life. As the years moved on, the adolescent life became popular and much research on adolescence began to emerge. The popularity of young adult literature began to grow and the publishers began to focus on the emerging topic.

People started to create a separate section for young adult novels just like children's literature and novels written for adults.

The genre of young adults reached its peak during the years of 1970s and mid 1980s and it is considered the golden age for young adult literature. They explored various themes like rape, suicide, parental death, and murder which the adolescents face. In the coming years, young adult literature pushed itself more and started to explore even darker sides like drug use, sexuality, identity, and even teenage pregnancy. After 2000, there was diversity in themes and many sub-genres started to bubble up like the problem novels, which deal with the everyday problems faced by adolescents.

The young adult genre explores many darker themes, more often the genre of a young adult is mixed with many other genres to make it light, such as a fantasy. Mixing fantasy with young adult fiction would make the readers understand the darker side with a lighter tone. Since the age of adolescence is between the 'young' and 'adult' the magic and fantasy worlds would satisfy the younger self of them and the darker side would satisfy their curious adult mind.

The genre of Fantasy fiction has a rich history for inspiring critics to dissect and apply to the modern genre. The genre is often considered as the modern counterpart to mythology. Fantasy has its roots in myth and legend which makes it the most elemental of all genres. It is a fascinating fact that many generations believed in legends and myth that intensely affected their lives and culture. Fantasy looks beyond the rules of how individuals perceive the world they live in. They are set outside the parameters of the reality known by the people. The origin of fantasy can be traced back to mythologies, epics, and legends. For example, Prometheus in Greek mythology felt pity for earthlings and gifted them fire. Zeus punished Prometheus for giving them fire by tying him in Mount Causaus for 30,000 years where an eagle would feed on his liver daily. There are

also other stories like Apollo who provides daylight by driving on the chariot of fire every day. These supernatural qualities are also considered as important elements in fantasy.

In Epics and legends like *Beowulf*, contains fantasy elements like witches, dragons, and monsters like Grendel play a vital role. In the legend of King Arthur, he undertakes many adventures and meets many Magical beings. The first piece of fantasy and young adult literature appeared in the 1800s with Hans Christian Anderson and Lewis Carroll.

William Morris is usually considered as the first modern fantasy writer. In the late nineteenth century, he fused the imaginary world and supernatural elements with a series of romantic novels. Though the trend of fantasy started in the early nineteenth century, fantasy got its footing with writers like Lord Dunsany, the author of *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, and the myth inspired writer E.R Eddison. Fantasy fiction is more about visionary ideas than writing. More than penning well-crafted words in the work, fantasy requires a special skill of being able to see beyond the boundaries of the world around us. Edgar Rice Burroughs, the creator of *Tarzan* is considered the literary godfather of this group. For his *Mars* series which began with *A Princess of Mars* in 1917, he combined the genres of science fiction and fantasy. Michael Moorcock, the author of famous novels like *The Stealer of souls* and *Gloriana* was considered by many as the greatest of home grown fantasists for his sword and sorcery tales with a uniquely British twist.

Fantasy has unrealistic settings or magic or mythical beings or possibly involving supernatural forms as a primary element. Fantasy almost always contains magic which may be seen in the settings or the plot or even maybe practised by the characters. It usually refers to stories that could not happen in real life. Fairy tales by modern fantasy writers like Hans Christian Andersen have no problem in relating to young children which made most adolescents believing in fantasy. The theme of good vs. evil is prominent and the distinction between good and evil is

mostly vivid between them. Good is Good and evil is evil. The climax has a happy end though some secondary characters may die in the process.

Criticism has been very reluctant to analyse the genre of fantasy before the arrival of Tolkien and Todorov. Tzvetan Todorov is a French Bulgarian who defines himself as a historian and essayist. He belongs to the era of contemporary philosophy and he is much interested in the field of literary criticism. He published his theory on fantasy in his work *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* in 1970 which was later translated by Richard Howard as *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* in the year 1973.

Todorov agrees on the idea of the secondary world and observes fantasy in two categories: The Marvellous and The uncanny. In the category of the marvellous, the audience or the reader is aware that there are no sensible explanations to the events like magic that takes place in the work. He includes genres like science fiction and fairy tales under this category. The uncanny is the bizarre occurrences that happen but it has an explanation such as dream or insanity. For example, Dostoevsky's *The Double* falls under this category. The category of Marvellous and Uncanny is further divided into Pure Marvellous, Fantastic Marvellous, and Pure Uncanny, Fantastic Uncanny. In pure marvellous, the events which occur are supernatural and magical and there is no rational explanation given for these occurrences. In works under Fantastic Marvellous, supernatural events are gradually accepted as supernatural in which fear is turned to wonder. Pure uncanny events are horrid and strange due to the devious protagonist but not supernatural. In fantastic uncanny, the supernatural events are eventually given a natural explanation and the reader's hesitations are resolved that there is no explanation.

The American author who fuses all these genres (young adult, fantasy, and fiction) in her works is Sara Raasch. Some budding contemporaries of Sara Raasch in the genre of Young adult

fiction are Laura Sebastian, Kristen Simmons, and Holly Black. They belong to the same category of American young adult writers using the genre of Fantasy to capture the attention of the adolescents. Laura Sebastian, who was born and raised in South Florida loves telling stories. Sebastian writes about women who are strong in all ways with a little bit of magic in them. Sebastian's trilogy of *Ash Like Princess* has many similar elements to Sara Raasch's *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy, like a strong female protagonist claiming their kingdom from an evil King. The themes of identity crisis, slavery, and love triangle can be seen in both these series.

Kristen Simmons is a critically acclaimed author of books for young adults. Her debut is a trilogy named *Article 5*. The novel is about two teenagers who are on the run from the government in a post War dystopian America. She has also collaborated with Sara Raasch in the novel *Set Fire to the Gods* which was published in the year 2019. Holly Black, the American writer, and the editor are best known for her *The Spiderwick Chronicles*. Her debut novel *Tithe: A Modern Faerie Tale* is a young adult fantasy novel that follows the story of a sixteen year old young nomad named Kaye Fierch who tours the country with her mother's rock band.

Sara Raasch is a budding young adult novelist who was born in 1989 and debuted her first novel in the year 2014. She authored the New York Times bestselling trilogy *Snow like Ashes*. She had been bookish from the age of five and nothing has changed since then. She used to draw handwritten pictures at her young age but none of them seemed to be featured in her books. Her debut Young Adult fantasy novel *Snow Like Ashes* came out on October 14, 2014, and its sequels *Ice Like Fire* and *Frost Like Night* came out in 2015 and 2016. She also published the *Stream Raiders* series which contains two novels *These Rebel Waves* and *These Divided Shores*.

Stream Raiders is about the protagonist Adeluna who is a soldier. Five years ago, she helped her people from Grace Loray to get freedom from its oppressor Argrid. Benet is the crown

prince of Argid and is considered a heretic by his people. Devereux is a pirate and one of the outlaws called stream raiders. The novel is about the journey of Adeluna, Ben, and Devereux deciding who they are and they decided to move towards peace. The novel is all about colonization, oppression, religious hierarchies, politics, and magical experiments, etc.

After the series of the *Stream Raiders* in 2019, Sara Raasch co-authored with Kristen Simmons and published *Set Fire to the Gods*. The plot revolves around Ash and Madoc. Ash is a descendent of a long line of gladiators. Madoc grew up fighting in the streets and earned for his family. But unlike his opponents who use Earth god's power, he uses something else which has not been seen in centuries. Ash unintentionally puts fire god and earth god into a conflict and that can be settled only by the deadly gladiator games. When the Gods started to force Madoc, he and Ash discover an ancient war that will be of threat to more than one immortal. The characters in *Set Fire to the Gods* are trying to figure out a way to escape from the social restraints while dealing with things like grief, trauma, drive for vengeance, etc. Some thought provoking questions are raised around politics, religion, nationalism, and classicism.

Though Sara Raasch wrote many novels, she is celebrated for her *Snow Like Ashes* Trilogy under which comes the three novels: *Snow Like Ashes*, *Ice Like Fire*, and *Frost Like Night*. Sara Raasch started the outline of the *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy when she was twelve and years later when she kept the general idea and edited it for a year before sending it to the editor.

Raasch dedicated her first novel to everyone who did not laugh at her when she was twelve and said she will publish her novel someday. She created the characteristics of a sixteen year protagonist, Meira whom she wanted to be when she reached the age of sixteen. Since the character Meira had travelled with Raasch for many years, both Meira's and Raasch's characters got reflected in each other.

The *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy is set in the land of Primoria where the Winter was conquered by the kingdom of Spring and its citizens are enslaved. They had no magic or a monarch to save them and their only hope for freedom is in the hands of the eight refugees who escaped during the war and waiting and trying to steal back the magic and rebuild their kingdom.

Meira, the protagonist who is orphaned during Winter's defeat lived her whole life as a refugee. She was trained as a warrior and would do anything to help Winter rise to power again. When the scouts discover the location of the ancient locket that can restore Winter's magic, Meira decides to go after it herself only to find herself thrust into a world of evil magic and dangerous politics and ultimately comes to realize that her destiny is not, never has been, her own.

The world building of Sara Raasch is astounding in *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy. All the kingdoms are fleshed out with unique cultures and people. The people of every season meshed so well with the season they represent. For example, Summer is known for being a fun and pleasure seeking the kingdom, whose people have bright red hair. The actual season summer is the time when people go on vacations and it is the time when life seems to be generally more fun than it is at any other time. The novel also discusses things like duty and finding of self. Most characters in these novels and especially Meira constantly battles between people they have to be for the kingdoms and finding their individuality.

The *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy comprises various themes like sacrifice, love, slavery, power, politics, betrayal, etc... but the theme which dominates all the other themes is the journey of self. The upcoming chapters are the analysis of the trilogy *Snow Like Ashes* based on the protagonist Meira exploring the identity of self through her journey in the fantasy land of Primoria. The following Chapter Two discusses the protagonist Meira's quest for identity in *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy.

Chapter Two

Quest for Identity

Erik Erikson is a stage theorist and a German American developmental psychologist. He is also a great psychoanalyst and is famous for his theory on the psychological development of human beings and most importantly it is he who coined the term identity crisis. He took the psychosexual theory of Freud which was a controversial theory and modified it into an eight stage psychosocial theory.

Erikson's work *Childhood and Society* was published in 1950. It deals with Erikson's theory of psychosocial development which proposes that this development continues throughout the lifetime. According to this theory, a person undergoes eight stages of development throughout his lifetime which is from infancy to late adulthood.

Each stage has two conflicting ideas or a task that needs to be resolved. When each of the stages is completed successfully, it results in a healthy personality. If a person fails to master these tasks, it leads to feelings of inadequacy. Those eight stages of the developments are Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust, Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt, Initiative vs. Guilt, Industry vs. Inferiority, Identity vs. Role Confusion, Intimacy vs. Isolation, Generativity vs. Stagnation, and Ego Integrity vs. Despair.

The stage which dominates young adult fiction and the stage that requires for the analysis of the trilogy is the fifth stage 'Identity vs. Role Confusion'. Under this stage, the individual reaches the stage of puberty and successfully ends the age of childhood. After this, the age of youth and adolescence begins. At this stage, the growth and changes in the body push the youths to a psychological revolution within them. In *Childhood and Society* Erikson claims:

In their search for a new sense of continuity and sameness, adolescents have to re-fight many of the battles of earlier years, even though to do so they must artificially

appoint perfectly well-meaning people to play, the roles of adversaries; and they are ever ready to install lasting idols and ideals as guardians of a final identity. (235)

Due to this rapid change, the adolescents need to fight many battles that require a role model like the idols or some ethics to develop their identity. This explains the fact why many teenagers have singers, activists, and other celebrities as idols and try to follow their footsteps. This combination of the original childhood identity and the identity acquired from the selected idol which is taking place in the form of ego identity is the addition of identifications from childhood.

When an individual reaches this stage, there comes role confusion. At this stage, the individuals would not be able to identify what they like, what they want to do with their life, or who they are. The question of their sexuality and the confusion about themselves arises at this point. They drift away from their responsibilities and even jump from one relationship to another. If the situations are treated correctly, the incident would not be fatal like the other stages.

Kath Woodward, the editor of *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity* clarifies the difference between personality and identity. She explains that personality defines the characteristics of a person. Identity is not always stable. It can also be seen as a product of the society around us. Woodward in *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity* comments that, "Identity provides a link between individuals and the world in which they live. Identity combines how I see myself and how others see me." (7). Identity is a blend of how the people perceive themselves and how others view them. By taking both into account and the pressure of society and others over an individual, one's identity can be stable or changing.

Like Woodward, Ferguson also has his views on Identity. The key idea of Woodward about identity is that it is a combination of how someone views themselves and how others view them. Ferguson concentrates on the latter part, which is the formation of identity by others or society.

According to him, identity is shaped by aspects like race, gender, sexuality and social class. Race is a significant aspect when it comes to identity and it has great influence over an individual's identity.

A person's race would affect how he/she is treated by others. For example, a second generation Japanese born American girl who was brought up in America will consider her identity as an American until the society alienates and treats her differently. The identity of her would be in dilemma and finally with much pressure and understanding of society from others, she would introduce herself as Japanese American instead of American. Though it has a negative impact, the feeling of belonging somewhere gives them motivation and a source of pride.

Gender identity means one's inner sense of themselves as a male or female. Gender and Sex are not the same. Gender usually refers to a person's behaviours and personality which are generated culturally. The general idea of most people in society is when gender does not align with one's sex, they are not normal. This puts on a great level of pressure on people's transgender and intersex. The rights, laws and respect vary for people of sexuality other than heterogeneous. If an individual belongs to a particular social class, it may also lead to a sense of discrimination or pride.

The views of Ferguson and Woodward are similar in the aspect that external incidents waver an individual's identity which results in identity crisis which furthermore leads to a new identity formation or the acceptance of their own identity. In *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy, the sixteen year old protagonist, Meira comes under the fifth stage of Erikson's development theory and undergoes a process of new identity formation.

In the opening of *Snow Like Ashes*, Meira is in the camp near Raina plains where she and Mather, the future King of Winter are training under the guidance of Sir/William. Winter was enslaved when both were infants so they did not know much about the war that took place but

grew up hearing the struggles and the horrors of war. Their whole sixteen years went in nomadic missions to retrieve the locket so that they could bring back their kingdom again.

Meira is an orphan like Mather. It is said both their parents have lost their lives in the war. Growing up with all these stories and spirit, the passion to free their kingdom is rooted in both their hearts. Among the eight refugees, Alysson and Meira alone do not go on missions. The overflowing passion and spirit of Meira make her frustrated when the only mission she gets is going for food scouting. Meira wants to help and go on a mission but Sir always restricts her from going on a mission. This passion and dedication of Meira can be seen when she says, “I know Sir is aware of the dedication pulsing inside of me; I know he understands that I share his desire to get Winter back. And someday, he won’t be able to ignore me anymore.” (SLA 8). From the desperation of her to fight and the willingness to free her kingdom, she shows all the attributes of a soldier.

Meira took training and grew up as a soldier. For Meira, the idol guardian of identity mentioned in Erikson’s fifth stage is William (Sir). She keeps William as a fatherly figure and a mentor though he would always hide the fatherly nature and always be tough like a general on Meira. When the situation gets tough, most teenagers who have not yet formed their identity would seek help from their idols who inspire them. The words of them would go on in their mind and help them to overcome it. The same happens with Meira when she goes on a mission to retrieve the locket. When she realizes that people are coming beyond the door while she is searching for the desk, her fear and anxiety rise to an extreme level. She calms herself down with the words of William and grabs on to his advice: “*Focus on the goal. Don’t get sidetracked. Don’t let fear take hold of you—fear is a seed that, once planted, never stops growing*” (SLA 33). After she retrieved half of the locket with much struggle and returned to William, the soldiers of Spring had followed

her to their hiding place. Since they found their settlement, the refugees moved to the rhythm country Cordell and hopes to find allies. King Noam in return for their help demanded Meira to marry his son, Prince Theron. This plan was not transferred to Meira until she meets Theron before the ball in the library. When the servant girls Rose and Mona in Cordell makes Meira put on corset Meira argues:

Are you—sure—all this—is—necessary?” I sputter between tugs on the corset. I understand wanting to be more put together for a ball, but surely all this discomfort isn’t really needed? Can’t I just slip on a simple dress? Or, better yet, not go at all? But Sir and Mather will be at this ball, and I don’t want to wait until it’s over to figure out what they’re planning. If I have to suffer through a few too-tight corset strings, then fine. (SLA 123)

Being a soldier, she always wears loose baggy clothes with her favourite weapon of Chakram strapped at her back all the time. When she is expected to wear a corset and gown, which a normal girl of her age would be happy and excited to wear, Meira finds it discomforting. According to her, Meira is a girl who wears loose shirts and weapons and fights and not the girl who wears a gown and attends balls.

Meira comes to know that the only way to help Winter is by marrying Prince Theron and live her life as his queen. She was distressed but when she uncovered the betrayal of King Noam, The marriage was stopped. She also participated in the battle when Spring attacked Cordell. During the fight, Meira was captured and was enslaved with the other Winterians who survived the war sixteen years before. There she found that her mother is Hannah (Queen of Winter) who died when Spring took over the Winter and that she is the monarch of Winter, not Mather. She also came to know that magic runs inside her and not in the locket. Theron came to Abril to rescue Meira and

was captured by Angra. To rescue his son King Noam with the help of Autumn waged war on Spring. Winterians who were enslaved in Spring for sixteen years also fought with the help of Meira and finally, they got freedom.

The next part of her journey continues in *Ice Like Fire*. Meira is a queen and she is expected to hold the responsibilities and act like a queen and not a rebel soldier. This novel has the role of confusion of Erikson. She does not know if she is a soldier or a queen and she does not treat the crisis of identity properly. Instead of listening to her inner self, she obliges with William and forces herself to act like a queen and the consequence creates a distance between her and Mather.

The novel *Ice Like Fire* opens with Meira sneaking off and playing war games with small children. Theron enters and they talk about the state affairs and their love. Meira was much interested in the affairs of the kingdom and some hesitation can be felt between her and Theron. When Nessa comes and steals her away to Dendera. Dendera proposes:

It's always "my queen" or "my lady." Hearing it now is a burst of cold air in a stuffy room, and I gulp it in.

"I told you," Dendera says, easing the Chakram from my hand and passing it to Garrigan. "You don't need this anymore. You are queen. You protect us in other ways."

"I know." I keep my jaw tight, my voice level. "But why can't I be both?" (*ILF* 15)

These words between Dendera and Meira hold much significance about her identity. People with whom she spent her whole life and considered as a family do not call her by name and bow before her calling 'My Queen' Everyone expects her to leave her past as a soldier and wants her to embrace her identity as queen. She wants to be both. She wants to help people using magic as well as Chakram and not with magic alone.

In the stage of ‘role confusion’, there comes a change in the relationships. The reason why Meira is with Theron instead of Mather and how stuffed up she is with her identity as queen is revealed when drunk Mather shows up in Meira’s bedroom one night. Meira breaks when Mather pours out his heart. They both cry and shout to each other the things they have kept inside, Meira jabbars within herself that:

I can’t be around Mather. I can’t afford to be around anyone who makes me feel like Meira the orphaned soldier-girl—which is why it’s better for me to be around people like Theron and Sir. Who they are makes it easier for me to be queen. (*ILF* 127)

This explains why Meira chooses Theron instead of Mather. She tells Mather that “I’d choose you if it wouldn’t unravel who I need to be.”(*ILF* 128). She is afraid that Mather would bring out her real self which she is trying to suppress. When Mather replies that “I think if we wanted to . . . I think we could have survived being unraveled.” (*ILF* 128). Meira breaks down at this point because that is what she always wished for. Being her true self and helping the kingdom as queen, Meira wants both to be both without leaving one behind.

Meira, Theron, and their soldiers left Jannuari and went on their journey towards Summer, Yakim, and Ventralli to find the keys to the magic chasm and to form allies. First, they travelled to Summer and there they met Ceridwen. She is the sister of Summer king Simon that makes her a princess. Meira is very impressed by Ceridwen and commends:

Ceridwen can’t be much older than me—eighteen or nineteen at the most—yet she found a way to overcome the stereotypes and prejudices of her kingdom. She’s even found a way to lead raiding parties against bandits despite being the king’s sister. She’s a Season and an ambassador, a princess and a soldier all at once. (*ILF* 164)

Ceridwen is around the age of Meira and both of them are much similar in many aspects. Simon is careless and ruthlessly has slaves from other kingdoms for pleasure. He always wants to be surrounded by joy and pleasure and does not care about his subjects. So Ceridwen feels what he does is wrong and she does her best in freeing the slaves by attacking the caravans in the borders. She does not sit idly giving orders to her soldiers but she goes into the battlefield with them.

Meira does not want to help her people only by using magic. She wants to contribute to her kingdom by being in the field. That is her true self. Meira is impressed by the fact that how Ceridwen broke the stereotypes and embraced her true identity. After the arrival of Ceridwen, Meira starts to become stable with her identity. She starts to feel that one can be a princess and a soldier.

It is nearly at the end of *Ice Like Fire* Meira completely embraced her identity with confidence. In Yakim after Meira collapsed in the library, Nessa and other Winterians who tagged along with her went to meet Meira. Nessa shouted at her for keeping everything for her and shouldering all the burden with her without sharing it with others. Meira realizes that she is treating Nessa the same way Sir treated her in the beginning. Before telling them the secrets of magic Meira opens up with them and says that she failed as a queen. After Dendera consoles Meira, Meira concedes:

This is me, whoever I am when I hold my Chakram. Both the thoughtful, careful queen I've forced myself to be and the wild, passionate girl who pushed her kingdom to teeter on the edge of defeat— but also snatched it back from that edge.

A warrior queen. (*ILF* 346)

When Dendera encouraged Meira that it was the real wild Meira who saved them and they wanted the real Meira back, she rose not as a warrior or a queen but as a warrior queen. Then later in

Ventralli Angra returns and with Raelyn they capture Ceridwen and kill the Summer king Simon in front of Ceridwen's eyes. When they left for the castle, Meira and the thaw rushed to the castle and the entry of Meira inside the castle show the power of her true identity. The following lines from *Ice Like Fire* shows how Meira embraced both her identity as queen and soldier with much pride and confidence. Raasch describes:

I march up the courtyard, past the arriving guests, past the slack-jawed footmen who blink at my tattered pants and the arrow wound on my arm and my retinue of battered Winterians. A few servants rush toward me, try to stop me from bursting inside, and I silence them with a stern glare and a flash of my locket. They know what this is, and they know the only person who would ever wear it, even if that person has a Chakram strapped to her back. (*ILF* 443)

Chakram and Locket have a significant role in the trilogy. From the beginning, both the objects are given importance by Meira. Wherever Meira goes, she brings her weapon of choice Chakram with her even if she has to hide it somewhere. She feels whole only when she has the Chakram with her so it symbolizes the identity of Meira as a soldier. Along with the Chakram, The Winterian conduit, the locket also has its significance even if it did not have magic in it. The locket which belongs to the long line of Queens of Winter Kingdom symbolizes her identity as a Queen. With the locket around her neck and Chakram in her back, she becomes a Warrior Queen to save not just Winter but the whole Primoria.

With these obstacles and pressure from external people like William, Meira has undergone a tough journey of an identity crisis. Though she failed a little in the middle, she was back in form and embraced her true nature. If she continued her journey only as a queen or only as a soldier she would not have won the battle and Primoria would have been drowned in the decay of Angra. Only

when people embrace their true identity their lives will be a pleasant and peaceful journey. The true identity does not necessarily mean a singular identity. Not everyone has a single identity in the world and it is alright to have multiple identity like Meira. The upcoming Chapter Three highlights the epic and Magical elements of the trilogy *Show Like Ashes*.

Chapter Three

Characteristics of Epic Fantasy

Fantasy is a tale that tells adventurous stories featuring magic or an alternative secondary world or sometimes both. The story in fantasy would not take place in the real world. Science fiction is the polar opposite of fantasy. Science fiction stories depict events that can be possible even if it is in a distant future which involves the advanced invention of technologies and science. In contrast to Science fiction, fantasy depicts impossible events even with advanced science.

Fantasy depends on things that do not exist in the real world. For example, the magic in the fantasy land of Primoria exists depending on the Magic Chasm which has no possible way of existing in the real world other than the imaginary land. Steven S. Long in his article “Defining Fantasy” discusses the concept of fantasy. The three major elements which define Fantasy in the minds of most readers are magic, alternate worlds and low technology. The major and the principal element of Fantasy is magic. The impact and presence of magic define the genre of fantasy.

The genre of fantasy has many sub genres like epic fantasy, high fantasy, low fantasy etc. The setting of all sub-genres of fantasy contains magic except for the lowest of low fantasy which completely lacks magic. The range and the power of magic differ depending on which the sub-genre ‘the novel’ comes from. The fact that magic exists in a novel does not always mean that the protagonist has some special magic. Magic can also take the form of an atmospheric element.

Magic plays a major role in Sara Raasch’s *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy. The magical land of Primoria has eight kingdoms and each kingdom has a conduit of its own. A conduit is a magical object which can be used only by the royal people based on their bloodline. The Winter kingdom is a female bloodline so the conduit can be used only by the queen or princess. The Kingdom of Cordell is a male blooded kingdom so the king or prince can activate its power. In the trilogy, the

female-blooded kingdoms are: Winter, Autumn, Yakim, and Paisly and the male-blooded kingdoms are Spring, Summer, Ventralli, and Cordell.

Each kingdom has a conduit which acts as a magical object. Spring has staff, Winter has a heart shaped locket, Autumn has a ring and Summer has a cuff. Yakin has an axe, Ventralli has a crown, Cordell has a dagger and finally Paisly has a shield. In *Snow Like Ashes* Raasch describes:

Other kingdoms use their conduits as they should be used—to enhance the already existing strengths of their lands and people. To make fields yield a plethora of fruit, to make soldiers strong, to make sick people healthy. But Angra uses his conduit to enhance the bad—to snuff out anything good unless it benefits him. To make every soul in his kingdom an empty shell of servitude. (*SLA* 28 - 29)

The magic from the conduits can be used for many purposes by the monarchs and they can use it as they wish. Winter focuses its magic on mining and Cordell focuses it on the opportunity. With the help of magic, people of Cordell turn any situation into their favour, making Cordell the wealthiest Kingdom. The Autumn is female-blooded and the royal blood line ascending the throne is a king. Therefore the king cannot use the conduit. The magic of Autumn kingdom can be used only when the little princess grows up, so the Autumn kingdom is free of magic. Summer King Simon focuses magic on pleasure and happiness making his kingdom, the most disorderly one. Yakim queen focuses her magic on knowledge, Ventralli is known for its art, beauty, and creativity, Spring, the villain kingdom in our story uses it to enhance the bad and to pluck out goodness out of people, making them an empty shell of servitude and finally Paisly is a mysterious kingdom until Rares explains everything to Meira. Rares is from the kingdom of Paisly and in *Frost Like Night* he explains to Meira how the Kingdom Paisly has no Queen or magic for many

years and about the secret of magic chasm. These magical elements make the trilogy *Snow Like Ashes* a fantasy novel.

The second major aspect of Fantasy is the alternate world. In a fantasy novel most of the stories take place in an imaginary or secondary world which is different from the real world we live in. The world which was built by the author in his or her books superficially resemble the Earth like mountains, rivers, and seas, etc. but they also differ in some other aspects. For example, In Primoria, there are two mountains namely Klaryn and Paisel mountain, Destas Sea, two forests named North Eldridge forest and Southern Eldridge forest, Rania Plains, and also two rivers called Feni River and Langstone River. Though all the settings of Primoria resemble much of the Earth one aspect which adds a magical element to the story is the climate of the Season Kingdoms. Raasch gives a pictorial description of the fantasy land Primoria thus:

A map covers the wall. Detailed and practically life-sized, it shows every part of Primoria from the northernmost Paisel Mountains all the way down to the southernmost Klaryns. The Eldridge Forest and Rania Plains sit in the center, a splotch of green and yellow with the Langstone and Feni Rivers nearly cutting the entire map in half. (SLA 167 - 168)

In the world of fantasy geography is unique and is often given flavour names. In the *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy, the eight kingdoms are separated as Season kingdoms which consist of Summer, Autumn, Winter, and Spring and Rhythm Kingdoms consist of Cordell, Ventralli, Yakim, and Paisly. Raasch has added a sprinkle of magic in the climate of the novels. In the Season Kingdoms of Primoria suggests, Winter Kingdom is filled with snow and ice for the entire year. The Kingdom of Summer is full of sandstorms and the climate of summer continues. The same conditions prevail for Seasons of Autumn and Spring where the climate of autumn and spring continue. The people

in the Kingdoms have also adapted to their respective seasons by birth so it does not affect their health or they do not feel uncomfortable by their extreme weather. Instead, when they travel to other kingdoms the weather is conducive to them. This irritation can be seen when Meira travels to Summer kingdom. Meira comments:

Thankfully Dendera let me change out of the starchy, high-collared monstrosity I wore for our departure from Winter—just the thought of being confined to wool and long sleeves in this heat makes black spots flutter before my eyes. But my bare arms are only a relief for the first few minutes before the unobstructed sun finds my fair skin, and I swear I can hear the rays chuckle with delight at such a tasty meal.
(*ILF* 158 - 159)

During the trip to Summer, the protagonist Meira feels suffocated and sweaty by the change in climate. Raasch also gives the name of the city capitals according to the month of the climates but with a few alterations in spelling. She names the capital of Spring kingdom as Abril, Winter as Januari, Autumn as Oktober, and Summer as Juli. Raasch also adds beauty to the setting by giving certain colours for the hair of each kingdom of Seasons. Winterians have white hair like ivory and Summer has red hair owing to the colour of fire which symbolizes the summer season. Autumn has black hair while Spring has blond hair.

Finally the least important of the three aspects is low technology. Most stories of Fantasy features a low level of technology which reflects the medieval era. They do not have characters messaging through mobile or a video conferencing. The wars or battles in Fantasy are fought only by hands, swords, or magic. They even lack medicines and automobiles.

The sub-genre of Urban fantasy is an exemption from lack of technology because the story takes place in the modern world of mobiles and technologies. The trilogy of *Snow Like Ashes* does

not come under urban fantasy so the use of technologies in the trilogy is very minimum. The most of technologies in the trilogy are the featuring of ships and some basic technologies in the Kingdom of Yakim. Some of the inventions of Yakim Kingdom are mentioned in *Ice Like Fire*. Raasch describes:

The other side of the castle stretches out over the Langstone River, allowing the churning water to spin great wheels that send power throughout the building. This water-fueled energy lets lights flare on with the twist of a knob, or hot water run from faucets without needing to heat it over a fire. (*ILF* 258)

Yakim is the Kingdom of knowledge which is a little advanced than the other kingdoms. Through the description of getting electricity by hydropower, bulb, and water heater readers understand that these technologies are only limited within the kingdom of Yakim.

The sub-genres of fantasy have their own unique features, distinct themes, and elements. Some common fantasy sub-genres are High fantasy, Bangsian fantasy, Low fantasy, Fairy tales, and Science fantasy, etc. The trilogy of *Snow Like Ashes* comes under Epic fantasy. The stories of epic fantasy novels features grand and romantic stories of hero's / heroin's fight against a powerful and evil enemy.

The common concept of all Epic fantasy novels is the concept of Quest towards an end goal. In most cases, the hero would go on a journey by travelling through the world towards one significant location. Along the way to that specific location the hero would meet loyal friends and overcome many obstacles. In the trilogy, Meira goes on a journey to reach the specific location of Magic Chasm to defeat the most powerful enemy, Angra. Along the way she meets her loyal friend Ceridwen, princess of Summer and together they overcome many obstacles like their meeting with Raelyn and even with Angra in Ventralli.

The characters of epic heroes grow with the experience they get when they go on a journey. The heroine of the *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy Meira has the quest for identity to save Primoria from Angra. To call a novel or a work epic it must be long and the total pages of the trilogy are thousand three hundred and eighty three and that makes the novel an epical saga. Besides quest, there are some other characteristics of a novel that define an Epic fantasy. Some common and important elements are the naive hero, Tragedy, Complicated plot, magic, and finally good vs. evil. These elements can also be seen in the trilogy of *Snow Like Ashes*.

The protagonist of most epic fantasies is an orphan or an ordinary person. He will be a good hearted person who knows a little about the dangers of the outside world. In simple words, he is a naive hero. He is pushed into a hard environment to handle situations that he does not understand or not powerful enough to handle. Through the course of the journey with the help of his allies and friends, he gradually attains the level of maturity to handle situations and attain victory.

The writers of epic fantasies mostly features the archetype of naive hero for two reasons. At first, the author takes this chance as a way to convey the details of the fantasy world and the information needed to the readers. Secondly, when the hero is weak in the beginning, the author peels out his weakness layer by layer through his physical and spiritual journey. If the hero is wise and strong without any weakness in the beginning the growth of the hero is rarely seen in the expedition.

The protagonist Meira is an orphan who is under the care of the eight refugees. Sir does not send her to a mission which makes her naive to the outer world. Meira had not visited the other kingdoms in the beginning of the novel, so the information and the minute details of other Kingdoms she visits in her journey is conveyed to the readers through her narrative. She gets other

information like the history of the kingdoms through Sir and others in the story. Meira is weak in the beginning and is given the great responsibility of being a queen who saves Winter which is too much to handle at her age. But finally, she embraces her identity as a warrior queen and becomes a better soldier and a queen with much bravery and confidence.

Epic Fantasy stories mostly end in a tragic note. The hero must do events that have a tragic effect to defeat evil. Another major element of Epic fantasy is Good vs. Evil where the good is always good and the evil is evil. One of the major virtues of a good protagonist is sacrifice. The theme of sacrifice plays a major role in the *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy. The author praises the act of sacrifice and the importance of the virtue is voiced out through the protagonist. In *Ice Like Fire* Meira states:

My body moves while my mind whirls, and I'm running again, flying through Rintiero. Magic is all about choice. Choosing to use it, choosing to surrender to it, choosing to take it from the chasm—choosing to let it break in defense of a kingdom. The most powerful magic of all is choice, and of that power, the strongest choice anyone can make is an act of sacrifice. (*ILF* 408)

Meira has to sacrifice herself in the magic chasm to save Primoria from Angra. To make that sacrifice even tougher, she has to die with a willing heart leaving Mather, sir, and everyone she loves. This choice of willing sacrifice is the only way to save her kingdom Winter and Primoria and as a queen, it is her responsibility to think about the welfare of her subjects and make sacrifice following the footsteps of her mother Hannah, the former Queen of Winter who sacrificed her life for the welfare of her subjects.

In Epic fantasy novels, the plot is complicated and the plot is about the attainment of the goal at the end of the quest. Most epic fantasies overflow with magic that the major element of

the plot would be magic. The hero possesses unique magical abilities that he would be the only one who can destroy the evil. The journey of Meira starts with the goal to save Winter from the hold of Angra. As she starts the journey, she discovers many secrets through Hannah in her dream that she is the heir of Hannah and the Queen of winter. Through Hannah and by the magic in her, Meira discovers the secret and history of Magic in Primoria step by step throughout the novels.

Rares explains the history and the secrets of magic. In Primoria, within the Klaryn Mountains magic exists in a giant electric ball of magic, on top of which the Seasons lie and since the effect of consistency in the climate. Thousand years back everyone on Primoria had their conduits and it was not reserved for the royals. With each terrible thing like a theft or a murder done using the magic, a dark cloud of decay was formed. The power of the evil Decay and its hold on people is mentioned in *Snow Like Ashes*. Raasch explains:

More black clouds of Decay appear, rising out of towns, villages, all from people who use conduits to do terrible things. A murder, a theft, a woman cowering as her husband beats her. Each time someone uses a conduit for corrupt ends, the Decay grows; and each time the Decay grows, it finds people, seeps inside of them, and makes them do even more corrupt things. (*SLA* 258)

Whenever a person uses magic for an evil purpose, the decay grows by feeding on their evil acts and manipulates them to do even more corrupt things. The monarchs of four Seasons and four Rhythms who were watching their kingdom fall apart decide to wipe out decay from their kingdoms. They purged the smaller Conduits and decided to create eight Royal Conduit for each Kingdom to eradicate Decay from Primoria. That creation resulted in the eight conduits. Every monarch destroyed and weakened the decay out of their kingdom except for the Spring. The king of Spring was fascinated by the power of Decay and accepted every last bit of decay into him.

King Angra lived throughout by keeping everything secret from the outer world and decided to take over Primoria by starting with the Kingdom of Winter. He chose the Kingdom of Winter because the lost chasm is under Winter. He does not want the chasm to be destroyed because all magic (both pure and decay) of Primoria would vanish if the chasm is destroyed. When Angra tried to take over Winter, Hannah desperately asked her conduit the way to save her kingdom. Later Meira found the truth about how magic works. In *Snow Like Ashes* when Hannah explains about magic Meira decodes and understands the way magic works. Meira comments:

The Royal Conduits are connected to the kingdoms' bloodlines, so if the rulers had let their conduits be broken after they chased away the Decay, they would have become their kingdom's conduits. Magic always needs a host, and with a human host, magic doesn't have the limitations that come with object hosts. (SLA 353)

Be it a decay or pure magic, it always needs a host so when the Royal conduits are connected to the bloodline breaks as a sacrifice, the rightful wielder becomes a conduit themselves and if they also die at the same time, the magic goes on to their heir. Like how Hannah died and Meira became a conduit herself. If in case the conduit wielder does not have an heir like the queen of Paisly, the subjects of that kingdom become a conduit. Since Hannah asked the magic the way to save her people, magic asked her to break the conduit in the defence of the kingdom so that Meira could become a conduit. Hannah made a deal with Angra that he can kill her but must step out of Winter so that Meira in future can become a conduit and help Winter.

Angra found that Hannah had a baby and the baby did not die in the war like he expected. Hannah asked Sir and Alysson to grow Mather, their son as the heir of Winter and Meira as an orphan so that Angra would spare Mather's life since Winter's conduit is a female-blooded line and Meira can be safe. Hannah did not realize the danger Angra would pose to the world. If she

had known better and asked the correct question like Meira on how to save everyone, she would have sacrificed the locket in the Chasm and everything would have finished smoothly without the sacrifice of Meira's life.

In Ventralli, when Theron was under the control of Angra and killed King Noam, he became the king of Cordell but when Angra ordered Theron to take Meira as a prisoner, he got a flash of himself when he took her so instead of tying up Meira he tied himself up and asked Meira to escape. When Meira compelled Theron that he is the king of Cordell and he can use the magic from the dagger to wipe out the decay of Angra which is controlling him and he just has to want it for that to happen but Theron states:

“I don't want it.” He pulls the dagger out of his belt and tosses it away from him like it's a live flame and he a stack of dry wood. “I—I agree with him. I want his magic, not the conduits. No more conduits. I want the world to be free, equal—but I don't want . . . I won't hurt you. I won't hurt you.” His strain releases in a sob that wracks his whole body. “I won't hurt you like I hurt my . . .” (*ILF* 470)

When Meira left with Rares to Paisly, she gave the dagger to Mather so that he can help the Winterian prisoners to escape. After Meira reached Paisly, Rares opened up about the secret of Paisly. Many years back, people in Paisly had formed a rebel group named 'Order of Lustrate' against the magic of their queen. They wanted magic to be eradicated as a whole and started a rebellion against their queen. Their Queen sacrificed herself and the conduit for the welfare of their people. That sacrifice made all the people of Paisly as conduits which resulted in infertility and slowness in their age but they had magic and they were careful not to form decay out of it like their ancestors.

Paisly hid the chasm from other kingdoms so that it would not fall in the wrong hands and kept their kingdom as a mystery. They have created a labyrinth so that the chasm cannot be accessed even if it is found. To eradicate the magic from Primoria. It can be done only by a conduit wielder who must willingly sacrifice the conduit into the chasm. This was also the answer from the magic when Meira asked the way to save everyone and to sacrifice herself willingly into the chasm because she is a conduit. For the sacrifice to happen Meira must be able to access the Chasm. The secret to enter the Chasm was only known to the people of Paisly who have taken their secrets grave except for a clue in a paper. The clue states:

Three people the labyrinth demands

Who enter with genuine intent

To face a test of leadership,

A maze of humility,

And purification of the heart.

To be completed by only the true. (FLN 105)

When the lines are deciphered they find that only three people of the genuine heart can side by side can enter the labyrinth. They would be tested under the aspects of leadership, humility, and purification of heart and these three tasks can be completed only by the true one. Meira decides to bring Mather and Sir along with her. All three make it to the first two trials and the last trial is the purification of the heart. A manifestation of Hannah appears before the three and each must forgive her for the chaos and the pain she caused to move forward. Mather and Meira forgive her wholeheartedly but Sir cannot forgive her for the pain she inflicted on Meira and Mather so he dies there. Both Meira and Mather reach the Chasm but Angra and Theron also appear there. A fight takes place between Angra and Meira and between Mather and Theron. Angra pulls Meira back

from the Chasm and prevents her from jumping into it. Finally, with Cordell's dagger which Mather brought with him, Meira strikes Angra with it and pulls him also into the chasm along with her. The chasm bursts like a colourful firecracker and pushed Mather out of the mountain. While everyone thinks Meira is no more just like magic she comes back. Meria explains:

“I didn't realize what it would do until we were falling,” she said, keeping her face tucked against him as if she needed to touch him as much as he needed her. “But we hit the magic, and I watched Angra disintegrate. I expected the magic to burn me up as well—but the dagger touched it before I did. Then everything went white, and I was flying up through the mountains. I thought . . . I thought I was dead . . . but it saved me. The dagger.” (FLN 463)

Theron willingly gives the dagger to Meira saying that he does not need that magic. He willingly sacrifices the conduit and magic. When Meira hits Angra with the same dagger and pushes him with her, it is Angra who hits the core first and disintegrates and along with Angra. The dagger falls in before Meira hits the core so the way magic pushes Meira out of it because already a conduit has sacrificed willingly. This complicated plot of magic in the trilogy makes the series of *Snow Like Ashes* suitable for the genre of epic fantasy.

Symbolically Raasch incorporates modernistic sense in her novel. The Chasm can also be considered as an allegory of Science and the magic which the Chasm creates can be related with the inventions made with the help of Science. Inventions are used for good purposes and does all the actions as pure magic does in the novel. For example: The pure magic in Winter kingdom gives the people of Winter the ability to locate the mines easily. Similarly many inventions like drilling technologies have made the process of mining easier for people.

Science can also be used for destructive purposes by creating bombs, dangerous viruses, etc. and that is decay in the novel. Both pure magic and decay origin from the same Chasm just like how both good and evil inventions origin from Science. The usage of Science and the magic are in the hands of the people who use it. It is a choice one has to make between the pure magic and decay. The line in *Frost Like Night*, “The good and the bad that the magic gives us are equally unnecessary.”(FLN 453) can be applied for science and technology. It brings out the modernistic thinking that both good and bad that science and technology does are equally unnecessary. The upcoming Chapter Four deals with the protagonist Meira’s journey based on the concept of monomyth.

Chapter Four

The Hero's Journey

The quest is central to the romantic fiction. Quests are heroic in nature, usually featuring one protagonist who goes on a dangerous mission against all odds to save a group of people or society. In the course of which he learns more about the world and himself, and in the end attains true heroic stature. Quests are the foremost element of the epic. They also have a particularly large presence in medieval romance, folklore, and Greek and Roman mythology, and have been playing an important role in fiction since the earliest examples of English literature.

Joseph John Campbell, the American professor at Sarah Lawrence College is specialized in the field of literature and worked in comparative mythology. He is famous for the concept of Monomyth which is elaborated in his work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, he discusses the journey of the archetypical heroes in the world of mythologies. The concept of monomyth is also called 'The Hero's Journey'. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* is a classic work on comparative mythology. Campbell accumulates the characteristics of mythical heroes of all centuries and outlines Hero's journey as a universal motif of adventure.

In the first, second, and third chapters, Campbell describes his seventeen stages of the monomyth. He also organizes the seventeen stages into three sections namely, 'Departure', 'Initiation', and 'Return'. In the section of Departure the stages are, The call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, Supernatural Aid, The Crossing of the First Threshold, and Belly of the whale. Stages that come under the section of Initiation are The Road of Trials, The Meeting with the Goddess, Women as the Temptress, Atonement with the Father/Abyss, Apotheosis, and The Ultimate Boon. Finally under the section of Return comes Refusal of the Return, The Magic Flight, Rescue from Without, The Crossing of the Return Threshold, Master of the Two Worlds, and Freedom to Live.

It is also said that the journey of heroes does not need to contain all the seventeen stages explicitly. Some myths or journeys may focus only on one stage while merely brushing up the others. This chapter deals with the hero's journey of Meira, the protagonist of Sara Raasch's *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy.

In the section of 'Departure' there comes a stage called 'The call to Adventure'. In this stage, the hero lives in his ordinary world in a normal situation. When a piece of information or a crisis is raised, the call for adventure arises. The crisis may directly involve the hero or the hero may voluntarily come to contact with the chaos. Often a character gives a warning to the hero not to jump into the realm of the unknown. Campbell also says a blunder may also bring the hero to come in contact with the forces that are not rightly understood. In *HTF* Campbell states:

A blunder—apparently the merest chance—reveals an unsuspected world, and the individual is drawn into a relationship with forces that are not rightly understood.

As Freud has shown, blunders are not the merest chance. They are the result of suppressed desires and conflicts. (46)

Campbell says that the blunder made by the hero uncovers the secrets of the world and it makes them fall into the realm of the unknown. He agrees with Freud and explains that these blunders are the result of the hero's desires and conflicts. These blunders open the chapter of destiny in the life of the hero. The adventure may begin as a blunder or when taking a stroll, the eyes of the hero may be lured by an unknown curiosity. Examples of how the hero starts his journey are limitless but the physical or mental journey of the hero starts from this stage.

The call for the protagonist Meira of *Snow Like Ashes* starts when William and others return with information that their conduit locket is near and some soldiers must go on a mission as soon as possible to retrieve the locket. The journey of Meira begins with the blunder she causes due to

her desire to serve her kingdom. William, the fatherly figure of Meira warns her of its danger and restricts her of the deadly missions. She throws tantrums by arguing and shouting like “This isn’t enough! And while I can’t fault you for caring about the most efficient ways to save our kingdom, I know I can do things for Winter too.” (*SLA* 16) Finally, William accepts and grants her permission for the mission to retrieve the Winterian locket. This blunder of Meira going on a mission starts her adventure towards her destiny of saving the fantasy land of Primoria.

The next stage after ‘The Call of Adventure’ is the stage of ‘Refusal’. Most often in the myth which is portrayed as reality, the hero does not heed to an adventure and refuses the call. He does not like to come out of his comfort zone. This refusal of calls result in a sign of monovalent tendency. The hero’s mind is plagued with denial and lies.

Meira in *Snow Like Ashes* does not refuse the call. She accepts it with the excitement saying, “I bite back my squeal of triumph but it comes anyway, a weird blubbery noise that catches in my throat and bursts out of my still-frowning mouth.” (*SLA* 17 - 18). Since the refusal of the call does not take part in this trilogy, the next encounter that Meira faces is the ‘Supernatural Aid’.

In the stage of ‘Supernatural Aid’, the hero meets with a protective figure who is usually an old aged man. He gives the hero amulets, magic, a map, or some kind of information that the hero needs on this journey. Campbell in *HTF* comments:

Not infrequently, the supernatural helper is masculine in form. In fairy lore it may be some little fellow of the wood, some wizard, hermit, shepherd, or smith, who appears, to supply the amulets and advice that the hero will require. The higher mythologies develop the role in the great figure of the guide, the teacher, the ferryman, the conductor of souls to the afterworld. (66)

It is not required that the supernatural helper must be a man or a fairy godmother. It can be some wizard or a shepherd. They appear and offer something of value to the hero which helps him to understand the world better or even helps him in defeating the evil. The valuable item can be a map, amulets, or even a piece of advice. Such supernatural aid that comes as an advantage of Meira is the character, Hannah. Through dreams and magic Hannah always provides information through dreams and magic and infuses the truth about the past and magic to Meira. Though she shows Meira as a puzzle of images, it helps Meira in the understanding of the situation and does not stun her with all the twists and shocking revelations. In *Snow Like Ashes* Meira explains:

She puts her hand on my forehead. I moan in protest, but the moment her skin touches mine, scenes fill my head, images and pictures of ... the past. Hannah is showing me the past. I don't know how I know that, but the truth zings through me as certainly as the images, and I draw in ragged breaths to keep myself from descending into panic. (SLA 257)

Hannah provides her with ample knowledge about her truth in birth and about the past which makes her strong for the upcoming journey. Only with this knowledge and understanding, she is able to uncover so many secrets and prepares herself as a sacrifice for the land of Primoria.

The hero with the help of guardians moves forward in his adventure until he reaches the stage of 'Crossing the first threshold'. Campbell in *HTF* comments on the stage of 'Crossing the threshold' that, "Beyond them is darkness, the unknown, and danger; just as beyond the parental watch is danger to the infant and beyond the protection of his society danger to the member of the tribe." (77). With this stage, the hero goes into the field of adventure leaving the limits of his world.

He goes into the realm of the unknown where the rules and limits are not known to him. This is the stage where the hero can no longer be the person he was and there is no way to return.

The stage of 'Crossing the first threshold' for Meira in *Snow Like Ashes* comes when she comes to know that she is the Winterian Queen. She was taken to Abril as a prisoner and was working as a slave along with the other Winterians. When she came to know that she can use magic and she is the conduit of the Winter, along with the Autumn and Cordellian soldiers she fought and released her subjects. Meira remarks:

I'm Hannah's daughter. I'm Winter's conduit. I'm a warrior, a soldier, a lady, a queen, and most of all, as I plunge across the snowfield toward Jannuari's silent ruin, I'm Meira.

And no matter what Angra might try to do, he will not stop me from washing away the ashes of this kingdom's past and filling our lives with the glorious icy peace of snow. (*SLA* 416)

As a result of her first threshold, Meira becomes a warrior, soldier, and queen. She cannot go back to her life of training as a soldier nor can she be the rebel she was once. She came beyond her home and started her journey with a goal. The journey starts with the end of the first novel of *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy.

After crossing the first threshold, Meira undergoes the stage of the 'Road of trials'. On the stage of 'Road of trials' Campbell in *HTF* claims:

Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials. This is a favorite phase of the myth-adventure. It has produced a world literature of miraculous tests and ordeals. (89)

Road of trials is a stage where a series of tests and tasks are undergone by the hero and these trials begin to develop them for their final goal. These trials will help the plot to move forward and help in the character development of the hero. This phase often appears in the myth adventure and the hero usually fails in one or more of these tests.

In *Ice Like Fire* to open the magic chasm, the people require three keys which are in Summer, Yakim, and Ventralli. Theron, Meira, and some soldiers go on a journey to these kingdoms. This journey made Meira see the reality and made her aware of the world around her. She experienced the politics and the different perceptions of each monarch about magic. Meira proclaims:

That's what makes me the most upset about the world—how magic shoves people into lives they might not want. No one should have to beseech higher people for permission to be who they are, only to find their pleas ignored.

No one should be forced to be something they aren't. (*ILF* 305 - 306)

Meira sees how each monarch makes use of the magic he has and she starts to despise magic. Unlike Theron, Meira despised magic in both its purest form and the decay. The concept of forcing magic on people does not sit well in her mind. It is with this journey she starts to think about saving Primoria instead of Winter alone.

The stage after the 'Road of trials' is 'Meeting with the Goddess'. The hero gains items or information that will help him in the upcoming journey. After the obstacles in the 'Road of trials', the hero has the opportunity to meet the goddess. Unlike most other stages, this stage is open for interpretation. It is not necessarily to be a woman or a goddess or even a meeting. The core concept is the hero to be bestowed with a gift of knowledge which does not have before. This is where the

hero gains something like fame or honour and even grants access to something which he cannot access before.

The protagonist, Meira meets Rares from Paisly kingdom in Ventralli. After crossing the ‘Road of trials’ on her trip to the three kingdoms, Meira gains answers for all her questions and a way to achieve her goal through Rares. He helps Meira to escape from the prison of Ventralli and takes her to Paisly. He explains to her about the history of Magic, how the Paisly Kingdom hides the Chasm, the boon, and curse of being a conduit, the story of Paisly, and also the way to reach the Chasm. Rares and his wife Oana help Meira in preparation for her final journey. Rares explains:

For once you pass through the door, the labyrinth will make you prove that belief. It will test all three of you in ways that measure this worth—leadership, humility, and heart. I don’t know what the tests are precisely, beyond the clues in the riddle, but when you face them, you should be as prepared as possible. (*FLN* 107)

Apart from training with Rares, Meira also gains essential information without which she would have failed in saving Primoria. Through Rares, she finds a way to reach the Magic Chasm. Rares explains her with the help of a riddle that was drafted by their ancestors. It is said that a person can enter the chasm only with two genuine people by his side and there are three tasks in the labyrinth which will test their leadership, humility, and heart. The person who completes all these tasks successfully can move forward to the Magic Chasm. After ‘Meeting with the Goddess’ the stage of ‘Atonement with the father’ arrives.

The stage of ‘Atonement with the father’ is the stage where the hero has to confront things that are holding them back in achieving their goal and their complete character development. The hero is initiated by the person or power which holds the ultimate power in his life. It does not have

to be an encounter with a male. It can also be someone or something with power. In the trilogy, Meira confronts her emotions and Oana helps her in initiating this confrontation.

Oana helps in breaking up Meira's mind and pour out all the feelings Meira has been stuffing up inside. This is Meira confronting her monster which she has created inside her. The 'monster' here refers to her 'emotional unstableness' which is a mixture of sadness, frustration, anger, and all the mixed feelings she kept inside throughout her journey. The reason for not letting her emotions is that she is afraid of breaking but to get a complete sculpture, the rocks must be broken and Oana takes the role of being the mother. She help Meira to accept her emotions and make her emotionally stable. Meira also forgives her mother Hannah which will be of great use in her future when a manifestation of Hannah appears in front of her during the third test in the labyrinth. It was due to Hannah's wrong question and her decision about Meira costs the pain everyone is going through. With Oana by Meira's side, she accepts and atones her mother for her deed. While Oana helps her in confronting Meira's emotions, Rares trains her magical ability. Meira argues:

I've been keeping every spare twitch of strength against the door in my mind, the one holding back all my crippling emotions. Keeping that door closed has been the only thing between a breakdown and me, but I'm tired, and the door is getting heavier, and Oana won't leave. But this lesson is about me. We can't move on to the other lessons, the ones that will help me control my magic, until we confront this one. Damn Rares—but I know he's right. (*FLN* 61 - 62)

After Meira opens her door of emotions, she starts to weep and rush out all her thoughts and emotions which she has buried inside. With all that flooding out and breaking down, she became relieved and was in an open mind for her training Rares with her newly steadied emotional mind.

With the ‘Atonement of the father’, the hero moves to the stage of enlightenment which is ‘Apotheosis’. It is a point where greater understanding is achieved by the hero. With this new realization and perception, the hero gets ready for the most difficult part of his adventure. Campbell in *HTF* states, “The world is filled and illumined by, but does not hold, the Bodhisattva (“he whose being is enlightenment”); rather, it is he who holds the world, the lotus.” (139). Campbell uses the example of Bodhisattva to explain this section of the Hero’s journey.

The Apotheosis for Meira comes in the last half of *Frost Like Night* while she falls in the Chasm. She fights with Angra who tries to stop her from falling into the Chasm. For the magic to be eradicated, a conduit must be willingly sacrificed to the chasm and which means Meira must wholeheartedly accept her death without any regret or hesitation. With much complications, Meira finally accepts her destiny and says, “I’m ready too—I will not let him stop me, and for every trembling grasp at salvation he unleashes, I slam into him with waves of my magic. Light and dark, purity and decay, as the source of magic, grows brighter and closer and hotter.” (*FLN* 453). Finally, with satisfaction, Meira falls into the chasm for the people of Primoria

The stage of the ‘Ultimate boon’ is a stage where the goal or the quest of the hero is achieved. The previous stages which the hero has crossed were all for this stage. Those stages have helped the hero to achieve this stage of ultimate boon. In many stories, the goal of the hero may not end with what they seek but ends with what they need.

In the trilogy after Meira jumps into the chasm, the dagger hits the chasm before Meira reaches the core of the chasm. This act of dagger reaching before Meira saves her from the sacrifice since the conduit dagger was willingly sacrificed by Theron. This kind of ending is not what Meira strived for. All through her journey, her goal was to sacrifice herself in order to save Primoria but what she needed was magic to be eradicated from Primoria, and in the end, she achieved what she

needed and saved Primoria. The act of magic disappearing from Primoria is penned in a beautiful way. Raasch describes:

Rock cracked in ear splitting shatters; the spark and hiss of the magic evaporating lit the air like the fuses of a thousand cannons readying for battle. But no battle came on the wake of their spark—this was the battle, this great explosion that drowned out the blue of the sky in favor of streams of color and magic that made every nerve in Mather’s body swirl under his skin. (*FLN* 458)

After Meira and Mather were pushed out from the mountain, the rocks started to tremble and colours of Red, orange, silver, and green started to erupt from the mountain like a volcano. The magic of Primoria evaporated in the air and the colours from the mountains disappeared in the blue sky. Mather and the others felt magic going out from their body. The boon of magic free land was achieved in the end.

Finally, from the last category of the ‘Return’, the stage of ‘Rescue from without’ appears in the trilogy as the final stage of the Monomyth. In *HTF* Campbell comments, “The hero may have to be brought back from his supernatural adventure by assistance from without. That is to say, the world may have to come and get him.” (192). After getting success in the long adventure, the hero may face some difficulties in returning to normalcy. The difficulty may be due to wounds or about rebuilding the lives. The hero does not always have to go through this alone. The rebuilding can be done by getting help from others and letting them in as a team. After six months of the magic free Primoria, all the monarch of the eight Kingdoms gathers in Bithai with the invitation from the King Theron of the Cordell. The invitation conveys:

I beseech you all with the same request: to gather in Bithai in three weeks’ time to put into effect the treaty that many of you signed before the war. The principles of

that treaty are needed now more than ever—principles that will help us sculpt a Primoria comprised of eight united kingdoms. Only together can we rebuild the world. (*FLN* 468 - 469)

Theron calls forth all the kings and queens of Primoria to heal their world and rebuild it from the trauma of Angra's decay. The after effects of the decay have created a great impact both on the people and the monarch especially Theron. Therefore they all come together to rebuild Primoria. The next chapter sums up the ideas dealt within the previous chapters and presents the researcher's findings.

Chapter Five

Summation

Fantasy Literature is an essential genre not only for children but also for adults. Most works of Fantasy serve as effective imaginative tools for teaching. It benefits children both literally and psychologically and teaches social skills. The *Snow Like Ashes* series comprises adventure stories with a search motif of quests, both internal and external. Quests help the characters grow as they strive for an object or idea. The struggle is between the two opposing forces trying to achieve their ends which are exemplified through the characters of Meira and the evil King Angra. Themes of good versus evil, heroism, and fanciful adventurers bring about growth in characters and plot.

J.R.R. Tolkien created a revolution in fantasy when he delivered and published his essay titled *On Fairy Stories* in 1939. He is a fantasy lover who has brought out the true nature of fantasy and given a new style for fantasy writers. As he says, fairy stories do not necessarily contain actual fairies or an unrealistic story as it is defined in the dictionary which is too narrow and too broad. Fantasy and fairy tales are something more than an unrealistic story.

The first chapter has dealt with the salient features of modern contemporary American literature and its evolution. The American writers have faced many challenges to create an identity for themselves regarding language. Early writers of America have followed the style of the British but eventually, they created uniqueness in their language and literature. The genre of Fantasy has evolved along with young adult literature. The hype in young adult literature in the years of 1970s and 1980s has contributed many young adult novels to literature. Themes such as rape, suicide, parental death, and murder which the genre explored have got an amazing response and appreciation from the adolescent readers. Therefore, writers of the young adult literature have

begun to explore more deeply into the genre and voiced out the darker side of the adolescent age like sexuality, drug use, and even teenage pregnancy.

The young adult writers have mixed the genre of a young adult with fantasy to keep the readers engaged. This mixing of genres makes the work even more adventurous and it fulfil the aesthetic sense of the adolescent readers. Criticism has become very reluctant to deal with the genre of fantasy. Tzvetan Todorov is the first critic to address the genre of fantasy from a critical angle. He has approved the concept of the secondary world and observes it in two categories as the Marvellous and uncanny. Sara Raasch has fused the genre of fantasy with young adults and penned all her works. She has written the trilogy of *Snow Like Ashes* which has a female protagonist named Meira. Raasch has used the first person narrative and stream of consciousness narrative in her trilogy of *Snow Like Ashes* so the readers can be well connected with the character's emotions.

The second chapter has brought out the theme of identity crisis of the protagonist Meira in the *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy. Meira's search for identity is supported by Erikson's theory of identity formation which is described in detail in his work *Childhood and Society*. He has discussed eight stages a person must undergo in his lifetime. The eight stages which he mentions are Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust, Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt, Initiative vs. Guilt, Industry vs. Inferiority, Identity vs. Role Confusion, Intimacy vs. Isolation, Generativity vs. Stagnation, and Ego Integrity vs. Despair. The stage of 'Identity vs. Role Confusion' in Erikson's *Childhood and Society* is predominant in the trilogy. Meira has been transformed from a soldier to a queen which created an identity conflict inside her. The inability to choose a single identity devastated her. In the end, she has accepted both her identity which made her move towards success.

In the third chapter epical and fantastical elements have been explained. The series has a complex magical plot which is the main element of fantasy. Magic and the secondary world have played an important role in the series. Apart from the involvement of magic, the secondary world and low technology also play a major role in the genre of fantasy. *Snow Like Ashes* trilogy has a secondary world which has a tint of magic in it. The series is considered unique because the secondary world Primoria becomes the magic free primary world in the end. Though the outlook of the trilogy is childish considering the name of the kingdoms like Summer, Autumn, Winter, and Spring, it has a deeper meaning when analysed profoundly. The series also has low technology which makes it a perfect fantasy novel. The series has captured the hearts of young adults with the creation of the secondary world Primoria and its magical plot.

Epic fantasy is considered as the sub-genre of fantasy. The *Snows Like Ashes* series has been placed under the sub-genre of epic fantasy. In epic fantasy novels, magic has a dominant role. Raasch has opened the doors to her fantasy world through her use of magic. The magic has made the series more fascinating and exciting. She has vividly described the magical world by giving distinct characteristics to each kingdom. Her creation of the magical world has helped her design the whole plot of the series. Magic has played a prominent role in the plot which makes the series *Snow Like Ashes* applicable for the genre of epic fantasy.

The fourth chapter takes the readers to the journey of the protagonist based on the narrative concept of Monomyth. Joseph Campbell has marked out the pattern of the hero's journey based on his study of myth. According to his theory, the journey has been divided into three stages, Departure, Initiation, and Return. Raasch's *Snow Like Ashes* series has served as a great example of the 'Hero's Journey'. The series has featured two quests, First the worldly one which is Meira's destruction of the magical chasm, and secondly the spiritual quest which is the embracing of her

double self-identity. Raasch's representation of Meira's heroic journey has followed the same mythological journey of a hero which is presented in the world of fiction across the globe. Meira has shared many of the traditional heroic characteristics of epic heroes.

Meira has started the hero's journey when she received the call to the adventure. She has accepted the call excitingly and faced many difficulties. Through the journey, Meira has learned to fine-tune her social and magical skills which lead her to maturity. Therefore, she becomes the most talented and good queen who fulfills her ultimate quest of defeating her enemy, Angra and saving the land of Primoria. Throughout Meira's journey, she has risked her life and encounters Angra's allies. In the end, Meira has succeeded in her quest of defeating evil and saving the world of Primoria.

Raasch has explained the identity of 'self' in a detailed manner through the character of Meira. The protagonist Meira has started her identity as a soldier under the guidance of William. She has been raised as an orphan by the refugees of the Winter kingdom. Meira's internal conflict of identity has started when she was declared as a queen of Winter. The conflict of choosing a single identity has made her weak. She has started to pretend for others by acting like a queen suppressing her identity as a soldier. At some point along her journey, through the words of Dendera, she has started to embrace both her identity and become a warrior queen.

In a world of reality, not all people land up in a profession which they are passionate about. A man who is a boxer by profession can be passionate about ballet dance or a woman who is a fashion designer can be passionate in the field of forensic science. Therefore a person cannot be identified by the profession he does. He can be talented and skilful in more than one field. It is the situation and the opportunities he receives in life that make him choose an identity.

The notion that the identity of a person is determined by the profession they do is not practically right. A person can be multitalented and can have double or more selves. Therefore, the stereotypic vision of society that a person of a certain profession must behave in a certain way creates an identity conflict. From the analysis of the *Snow Like Ashes* series, it is found that the series urges the readers not to give up their identity but to embrace their identities to achieve success in their life.

The journey of the protagonist, Meira conveys that a woman can be both a princess and a warrior. The profession and the passion can be different and neither can be neglected because both have equal contributions to the identity of a person. For Meira, being a Queen is her profession, duty, and responsibility, and being a warrior is her passion, an inbuilt identity. She cannot give up either of them and in the end, her inner conflict is resolved only after she has embraced both her identity. The series helps the adolescent readers to embrace their multiple identities and makes them feel that it is acceptable to have multiple identities if they cannot choose one identity.

Reading fantasy and young adult literature can create a great impact on people. When people start reading novels of a young adult at a young age, the stories may help them to get a clear view of themselves. The problems a person experience may vary with his age. Young adult fiction focuses on the problems in adolescence and it can be resolved with the help of literature.

In the process of this research, the scholar has come across areas that could prove fruitful for further investigation. A comparative study on Indian mythology and American fantasy fiction may be undertaken. Research on the effects of war and the series can be approached through postcolonial theory. The series can also be analyzed by the theory of refugee and migration studies. Research on the impact of fantasy in young adult novels among adolescents could also prove interesting. A thematic study based on slavery and cultural identity can also be researched. The

Trilogy can also be analysed in the light of Archetypal criticism and an in-depth characterization in the series also affords scope for further study.

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Queer Struggles in Jeet Thayil's *Narcopolis*: A Psychosocial Reading

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

SIRAJ MURSEETHA BANU S.

(REG. NO. 19APEN25)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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Contents

Certificate

Declaration

Acknowledgement

Preface

Chapter	Title	Page No.
One	Introduction	01
Two	Identity Struggle	12
Three	Loss of Life	22
Four	Diction: A Medium of Art	32
Five	Summation	42
	Works Cited	51

Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled “**Queer Struggles in Jeet Thayil's *Narcopolis: A Psychosocial Reading***” submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature, is a work done by S. Siraj Murseetha Banu during the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Mrs. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Dr. A. Josephine Alangara Betsy

Assistant Professor of English

Guide

DR. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Examiner

Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **“Queer Struggles in Jeet Thayil's *Narcopolis*: A Psychosocial Reading”** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature, is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

Siraj Murseetha Banu S.

April 2021

Acknowledgement

I am extremely grateful to the Lord Almighty for His guidance and grace in completing this project successfully during the year 2020-2021.

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Preface

Jeet Thayil is a renowned Indian writer. *Narcopolis*, is his first novel which won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature. It was shortlisted for the 2012 Man Booker Prize and The Hindu Literary Prize. The project entitled “Queer Struggles in Jeet Thayil's *Narcopolis*: A Psychosocial Reading” deals with the drugs and evil that follows a cast of style of Characters in Indian society.

The project consists of first chapters. The first chapter **Introduction** throws light on the literature in general, discusses the origin of Indian literature and gives a short biography of Pioneers of Indian novel and the biography of Jeet Thayil and his works.

Chapter two entitled **Identity Struggle** analyses how the character Dimple struggles to establish her identity.

The third chapter, **Loss of Life** depicts how the protagonist and other characters in the novel, become addicted for drug and alcohol which spoils their real life.

The fourth chapter entitled **Diction: A medium of Art** highlights the author's use of wordplay in the novel.

The final chapter, **Summation**, sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceeding chapters.

The researcher has referred the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook 8th Edition for the preparation of this project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Indian English Literature in its very tone and tenor presents a unique blend of tradition and experiment in both its matter and manners. The nineteenth century marked the beginning of the Indo-English Literature. When compared to the other literatures of India, it is the oldest in age and the smallest in volume. But it made significant strides and has occupied a substantial place not only among the national literatures but also in Commonwealth Literature. India has gone from eminent past to degeneration; from profound authority to shared conflicts; from imprisonment to freedom; from agrarian upset to digital innovation. The present day Indian Literature is firmly grounded in a philosophical cultural sensibility tracing its uninterrupted links with the very dawn of civilization in this part of the world. And yet the product is not an aberration in anyway in the modern context. The imbuses of Indian Writing in English adds a distinctive aesthetic flavor to the obvious delight.

Indian English Fiction is classified into two extensive categories such as pre-independence and post-independence. The historical novels written during pre-independence period do not show very originality or sense of historical perspective. Very few of the Indo-English novels of pre-independence period, have achieved even a tolerable measure of artistic beauty. In 1793, Sake Dean Mahomed wrote perhaps the first book by an Indian in English, called *The Travels of Dean Mahomed*. However, most early Indian writing in English was non-fictional work, such as biographies and political essays. English language may be foreign in its origin, but it has gained massive popularity over the years and is also the most favored language of

communication amongst people of various regions in India. Indian English literature contains the finest remarks of life and conduct.

The arrival of Indian literature in English can be traced to the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, English education was authorized in the cities of Madras, Bombay and Kolkata in the former British India. During this period famous Indian authors who wrote mostly in their mother tongue, began to try their hand at writing in English. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a social reformist from Bengal, was the pioneer of Indian writing in English. He claimed that English should be the medium of education in India. Rabindranath Tagore was also one of the eminent literary dignitaries during that age, well known for his work *Gitanjali* began translating his works from Bengali to English.

Writers like Sarojini Naidu, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan were the people who contributed to the Indian literature and whose works cannot be eroded. Salman Rushdie is a remarkable writer in post-independence era. Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri and Rohinton Mistry are the prominent writers of Indian origin. Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das, Arun Kolakar are the poets who arrived during the mid-twentieth century. These authors have often used Indian words and phrases in their writings along with English in order to illustrate a blend of Indian and Western cultures.

Mulk Raj Anand was born in 1905, along with other writers of his time including R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, are considered to be the pioneers of Indian English fiction. His first major work is *Untouchable* and it was published in the year 1935. His other major works are *Across the Black Water* in 1935, *Coolie* in 1936 and *The Big Heart* in 1945.

R.K. Narayan is an important defining figure in the South Asian literary world, who contributed over many decades and who continued to write till his death, was born among the first Indian novelist writing in English. He was discovered by Graham Greene in the sense that the latter helped him find a publisher in England. His most famous books are *Swami and Friends* in 1936 and *Malgudi Days* in 1942. He is one of the first Indian novelists in English to gather a global readership, by completely changing the literary scene in the country.

Salman Rushdie is an award-winning writer and he is known for his works like the *Midnight's Children* in 1981, and the controversial *The Satanic Verses* in 1988. His novel *Midnight's Children* won Booker Prize in 1981, Booker of Bookers in 1992 and Best of Bookers in 2008. It was also added to the list of Great Books of the 20th Century. In 1983, Rushdie was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, the UK's senior literary organisation. He was appointed Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France in January 1999. In June 2007, Queen Elizabeth II knighted him for his services to literature. In 2008, The Times ranked him thirteenth on its list of the 50 greatest British writers since 1945.

Anita Desai is a celebrated figure in the Indian literary world. Her famous works are, *Clear Light of Day* (1980), *In Custody* (1984), which is taken into an award winning film in 1993 and *The Village by the Sea* in 1982 for which she won the Guardian Children's fiction prize. Her first novel, *Cry, the Peacock* was published in the year 1963. In 1958 she collaborated with P. Lal to found the publishing firm Writers Workshop. In 1993, she became a creative writing teacher at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The 1999 Booker Prize novel of Anita Desai, *Fasting, Feasting* increased her popularity. Her novel *The Zigzag Way*, set in 20th-century

Mexico, appeared in 2004 and her latest collection of short stories, *The Artist of Disappearance* was published in 2011.

Agha Shahid Ali, a Kashmiri poet who moved to the United States, is the author of, *A Walk through the Yellow Pages* (1987), *The Half-Inch Himalayas* (1987), *A Nostalgist's Map of America* (1991), *The Country Without a Post Office* (1997). He is the English language poet of 20th century.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, an award winning and bestselling author, poet, activist and teacher of writing. Her work published in over 50 magazines, including the Atlantic Monthly and The New Yorker and her writing has been included in over 50 anthologies. Her books have been translated into 29 languages including Dutch, Hebrew, Bengali, Russian and Japanese. Divakaruni has judged several prestigious awards, such as The National Book Award and The Faulkner Award.

Two of her books *The Mistress of Spices* and *Sister of My Heart*, had been made into movies by film makers Gurinder Chandra, Berges and Suharini Mani Ratnam respectively. A short story, *The Word Love* from her collection *Arranged Marriage* was made into a Bilingual short film in Bengali and English. All the films have won awards. Several of her novels are currently under option at Hollywood and Bollywood.

Arundhati Roy is well known for her political stances and commentary. Her debut novel is *The God of Small Things* (1997). Her work also includes essays like *War Talk* (2003) and *Capitalism: A Ghost story* (2014). Khushwant Singh was an eminent Indian writer, journalist, lawyer and politician. One of the integral works of the 20th century Indian Literature is his novel *Train to Pakistan* (1956). His other well-known and renowned books are *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* (1959), *Truth*,

Love and a Little Malice (2002), *Delhi: A Novel* (1990) and *The Company of Women* (1999).

The women in India had made evident contribution to literature, and their contribution is well acknowledged in all literary circles. When it comes to artistic creativity, women novelist from India is the one to add a new element to the English literature of India. Obviously the current Indian literature is due to the effort of many creative writers, some of them are Sarojini Naidu, Nayantra Sahgal and Rama Mehta.

Vikram Seth is a novelist and poet who is born in Kolkata. He has written several books including *A Suitable Boy* (1993). His collections of poems include *The Humble Administrator's Garden* (1985), *Beastly Tales* (1991) and *Mappings* (1980). He is a writer who uses a purer English and more realistic themes.

Aravind Adiga's debut novel *The White Tiger* (2008) won the Man Booker Prize. It is one of the most defining segments in 21st century Indian literature. His other works include era collection of short stories *Between the Assassination* (2008) and novel like *Last Man in Tower* (2011) and *Selection Day* (2016). His novel *The White Tiger*, views humans as animals. Some of the lines are as follows:

Let animal live like animals; let
Humans live like humans. That's my
whole philosophy in a sentence. (237)

His works are marked by a linguistic and insular density that sees him weave complex narratives and multiple narrators into his tales, which combine a vivid portrayal of the rich patch work of Indian literature.

Amit Chaudhuri, is a professor who lectures in contemporary literature at the University of East Anglia. His work reflected his background in academia and also in his theory. Chaudhuri is also a renaissance man in the best sense of the term; he is also a musician who works within the Indian Classical belief. His first novel is *A Strange and Abstract Address*. His two recent works are, *The Immortal* and *A New World*.

The contemporary Indian writers in Indian literature are eminent throughout the world for its complexity and depth, with the range of fiction issued in the subcontinent reverse the abused assortment of India itself. Hence, young writers try to retracing the boundaries of Indian literature.

Kamala Markandaya was born in 1924. He is best remembered for her novel *Nectar in a Sieve*, published in early 50s. It is a touching count of the life of an Indian peasant woman, Rukmani, her struggle for survival and her abiding love for her husband. It also reflect the changing times and society.

Shashi Desphande was born in 1938, hails from Karnataka. A journalist by profession, she started at a very early age, publishing her first short story in 1970. To start with her stories were published in magazines like *Femina*, *Eve's Weekly*, etc. *Legacy* her first collection of short stories was published in 1978 followed by her first novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* in 1980. She is a winner of the *Sahitya Akademi* Award for the novel *That Long Silence*.

Jeet Thayil, an Indian Novel writer, was born on 13 October 1959 in Kerala to the writer and Editor, George. His father is a journalist, who used to write hard-hitting articles on society and politics for New Indian Express. George worked in various places such as Hong Kong, New York and India. Hence, Thayil was educated mostly

in foreign countries. He completed his post-graduation in Arts at Sarah Lawrence College (New York). He received awards and grants from British Council and the Rockefeller Foundation, Foundation of Arts in New York and Arts council in Switzerland.

In 2004, Thayil moved back to India and began writing *Narcopolis*. He is an Indian poet, novelist, librettist and musician. He is best known as a poet and is the author of four collections of poems: *These Errors Are Correct*, *English*, *Apocalypso and Gemini* and three novels *Narcopolis* (2012), *The Book of Chocolate Saints* (2017) and *Low* (2020). *Narcopolis* was his first novel which won the DSC prize (an International literary prize awarded annually to the writers) for South Asian Literature. It was shortlisted for the 2012 Man Booker Prize and The Hindu Literary Prize.

Narcopolis talks about the chronicled life in the opium dens of Mumbai. In many interviews he says the reason behind writing of this novel is to create a kind of memorial, to inscribe certain names in stone. The novel set mostly in Bombay in the 1970s and '80s, to tell the city's secret history, when the opium gave way to new cheap heroin.

The Book of Chocolate Saints revolves around the fictional character Newton Francis Xavier, a composite of the poet Dom Moraes and the painter F.N. Souza, founder of the Progressive Artists' Group. The novel traces the life story of the poet and painter Xavier, right from his childhood to his final years, but it is much more than a 'coming of age' story. His journey towards salvation or damnation or perhaps both is explained in this novel.

Low, is about the story of an Indian poet Dominic Ullis who, as the book begins, is about to attend the cremation of his wife, Aki, in Delhi who had fulfilled

her lifelong dream of killing herself. He subsequently makes a trip to Mumbai to scatter her ashes, and to find a way to extinguish the afflictions - insomnia, anxiety, hepatitis, heroin addiction – that have characterized his past life.

Thayil was a poet before he was a novelist and his skills with words shows throughout the novel. The first chapter of the book is one long, breathless sentence that makes your head spin and your heart race, much as opium high might do. It is a book both painful and sad, and yet it manages to be funny in places as it flicks from one character to another without much happening directly, while outside the den, Bombay grows up and changes into a harsher version of it.

Narcopolis is his first debut novel, uncovers a lost history crossing three decades, from the opium dens of Mumbai's underbelly to Mao's China, for a unique glimpse of how a culture is affected and transformed. The novel draws on Thayil's own experiences as a drug addict. And while conversing with Dev Benegal who is considered as the pioneer of the next generation of Indian cinema, Thayil says the novel *Narcopolis* is what he calls "the lost 20 years of my life." It touches many of the intense themes of greed, glamour, power, and vice and it also explains about God, drug, addiction, love, sex, death and perversion.

The plot itself revolves around five characters: Dimple, Dom, Mr. Lee, Rashid and Rumi. It begins with the prologue “Something for the Mouth”, which sets the tone of the novel with the disturbing imagery of sickness, dirt and brothelsand. The novel is broken into four “books”, “The Story of O”; “The Story of the Pipe”; “The Intoxicated” and “Some Uses of Incarnation”.

In this novel, he has written about Bombay, but still not celebrated the Slum Bombay of

Slumdog Millionaire or Anglo-affected Vikram Seth's novel *Post-provincial India* and many movies of Satyajit Ray. Thayer's rich, disordered and hallucinatory long for a novel sets in Bombay, a multilingual society where the greater part of India's languages, beliefs and ranks blend, where the overall currency is cash and its fantasies are told, in those schmaltzy, kitschy Bollywood films, which lives on an edge, occasionally exploded when terrorists set explosives, however coming back to life the following day, versatile and surrendered. Novels by Thayer's resourcefulness lies behind the way he has compressed the whole universe into opium den during the period of 1970 to 1980, by pimps, pushers, artists, hoodlums and eunuchs.

Book One, "The Story of O", starts with Dom's entry in Bombay. It is in late 1970s; he rapidly knotted himself into Bombay's fabric corrupt belly, especially, opium caves. On Shuklaji street, he met Rashid, the owner of Khana who played the significant role in this novel and where the narrator Dom has smoked his first pipe. He also met Dimple, who work for Rashid in Khana by preparing bowls of opium; The Bengali deals with money of Rashid, Rumi who is the confrontational businessman and several characters played in this novel.

Book Two, "The Story of the Pipe", explains about Mr. Lee, who narrates his biography to Dimple and also narrates about Dimple when he is more prone to death. Then the story witness about the adolescence and youth, beginning to look all starry eyed at, his armed force timing, and the results outcast and took flight to India and, in the end, Bombay, which he abhors stayed on the grounds of ocean that he is attracted to. At the point when Lee passes on, he left Dimple and his family's radiant opium pipes, in which she deals with Rashid's Khana position, where she makes pyali throughout the day in return the opium for her to smoke.

Book Three, "The Intoxicated" (132) has twelve chapters with the initial ones describing Rashid thriving in his business but losing his peace of mind, Jamal his son who without much effort takes after him, Salim, from whom Rashid buys bottles of Johnnie Walker and the new garad heroin, Lala, Salim's employer and old gangster who likes quoting from the Baburnama: "Women for procreation, boys for pleasure, melons for delight"(139). Rashid refuses, and his place is shut down by corrupt government officials and corrupt police. Rashid then has Khalid son kidnapped, and returned once his den is reopened.

The 1990s opens up with, drugs of every kind become available but the hard partying lifestyle of those in the slums finally begin to catch up the term. Dom decides to leave Bombay and begin a new life. Dimple realizes that she will die if she lives in the city, so she begs Dom to take her with him. Dom checks Dimple to a place called Safer. Safer is also attended by Rumi who has divorced his wife and lost everything. She is "more than a wife, more than both his wives put together, she's his business partner and she's better at it than he is"(176). Rashid's son takes over the business, transforming his den into a serious call center and hell of operation of drug sale.

Book Four, "Some Uses of Reincarnation" (263), returns narrator Dom to Bombay. In 2004, Rashid receives a visit from Dom, who everyone is doing. Rashid explains everyone is now dead expecting them. Dom asks to bring home some old things from the den as souvenirs, including opium pipes. He intends to turn them into a museum exhibit, or so he tells Rashid. Rashid views on prostitutes, criminals and drug addicts are as follows: "Put our shame on display, so the people understand the lowest of the low, prostitutes and criminals and drug addicts, people with no faith in God or man, no faith in anything except the truth of theirs" (288).

Dom smokes the opium pipe, and it is revealed that the entire book has been only one of his opium dreams. The book ends in the same spot it started: Dom and the pipe and the account they have now made together, met a textual call out signaling the circularity.

Toward the end of this novel *Narcopolis*, the creator entirely irate to draw the photo of present Bombay as an exceptionally uniform-looking spot bearing a skyscraper dwelling sort of look of consistency realized by the political changes completely upheld by the conservative, and the sort of financial changes augmenting the rich-poor separation. The substance of old Bombay that invited individuals of different groups or so far as that is concerned, anyone with ability, desire, with excellence, with brains was just chipped away. The change from Bombay to Mumbai indications at this change, the change from this old nineteenth century sentimental, marvelous, tranquil, moderate universe of opium to the snappy, fierce, cutting edge, corrupting universe of shabby heroin. Interestingly, there occurred a class shift – it is presently the poorest, irrefutably the downtrodden road folks who take to it. Prior when opium was going on, it was respectable as it was the well-off who did it, the high society Urdu-talking elites. Thayil completes the story that began in the 19th century through Lee's pipe, as it becomes the instrument of escape for the city's tormented souls. The next chapter analyses how the character Dimple struggles to establish her identity.

Chapter Two

Identity Struggle

“For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuch by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (Bible, Matt.19:12) these are the words of Jesus Christ. The reference to “eunuchs” in Mathew had yielded various interpretations. The word eunuchs are mentioned many times as “saris”, in the *Book of Isaiah* (Bible, 56:4). Dimple neither a woman nor man she is twenty-five year old hijra, (the eunuch) whose relinquished life in the light of addiction to drugs, sex, perversion, love, and death is dealt by the narrator.

The first chapter of *Book One*, “*The City of O*”, begins with the narration of the life of Dimple, whose job is to prepare opium pipes and being a full-time sex worker rather than a worker. The question of differences between sexes is discussed at length by her in this novel. She takes greatest pleasure in talking about the sexes and the genders. When the narrator Dom Ullis asks her if she is a man or woman she answers as,

Woman and man are words other people use, not me. I’m not sure what I am. Some days I’m neither, or I’m nothing. On other days I feel I’m both. But men and women are so different, how can one person be both? Isn’t that what you’re thinking? Well I’m both and I’ve learned some things, to my cost, the kind of thing you’re better off not knowing if you mean to live in the world. (11)

Through these words of Dimple one comes to know her lack of sense of identity and her hatred for men and women, when she is questioned about her sex. James Day quotes Anna Marie Jacose’s ideas to queer struggle in the review on life of

the third gender in Bombay city. She calls the sense of identity as “an identity category that has no interest in consolidating or even stabilizing itself. . . . [Q]ueer is less an identity than a critique of identity” (798).

Castration is a huge part of identity in the Hijras community. The severing of the male organ is not only hugely significant in a social and biological context, but also in religious context. Hinduism as well as the Christianity obviously accepts the eunuchs among the humans. Each called it in a different name, in Hinduism the castration is called Nirvan and in Christianity they used the word ‘saris’. And in the Greek mythology the place given to eunuchs is noteworthy. Jeet Thayil’s novel *Narcopolis* plays a remarkable role about eunuchs and their identity crisis using a character called Dimple.

Jeet Thayil presents Dimple, as a very bold and practical character. She was a boy by birth and had gone through gonadectomy at his childhood in a most brutal way. Like Tiresias in Greek mythology, Dimple has known both universes. Tiresias was drawn into an argument on the theme of who has more pleasure in sex, as he had experienced both as a man and a woman. Likewise Dimple is the only character who has experienced both sexes and is best for making a commentary on man and woman at the same time. When the same question is asked to Dimple she says, “Genuine union is impossible; all we can hope for is cohabitation” (18). She prefers to be a woman to hold a conversation and certainly has a disdain for men this is evident from the dialogue, when the narrator Dom Ullis asks her, “Is it better to be man or a woman? Dimple said: For conversation, better to be a woman, for everything else, for sex, better to be a man” (11). She believes woman to be more evolved biologically and emotionally, and she relates man to dogs. Though the thought of Tiresias and Dimple are in contrast here they are related, to give commentary over both sexes.

Dimple, is a multifaceted deep, and also a sad and lonely woman, Almost haunting the environment she dwells and converses, as one whose identity is taken away from her. The identity she carries in the word is none of her rather it has been thrust on her. While Mr. Lee, a Chinese drug dealer asks Dimple about the heinous way of her penis amputation, she casually replies “as if she were talking about a haircut or school outing” (66). She further narrates to him about how she got into prostitution: ““My Mother gave me to a priest, who brought me here to 007 and sold me to the tai. I was seven or eight. I don’t remember much about my mother or my life before I came. I don’t want to remember”” (67).

Even during her days in the brothel, Dimple used to read a lot. She has an unending quest for learning and excellence. “She’d learned English by conversing with customers and she was teaching herself to read” (12). She reads whatever she gets in her hands and tries herself to educate her. She not only reads the newspaper, film magazines, or paperback novels forgotten by her customers at the khana, but also reads the print on detergent packets and toothpaste tubes too. “She read the way an illiterate person reads.”(12). Hence, she makes her readings in secret because she never wants others to watch the way she reads. She was a story addict.

Thayil presents Dimple as a simple, poor and pathetic woman, who underwent a painful castration, even at the age of eight and it was at that age she took opium for the first time to forget her pain. “She was getting aches in her shoulders and her back and she woke up sometimes with the pain” (54). The pain haunts her till the end of her life. Dimple visits Mr. Lee in order to relieve her pains.

Mr. Lee is a father figure to Dimple. He rescued her from the tai and sheltered her till his death. From there he introduces opium as an antidote of pain to Dimple. He was the one who introduces her to the ever solacing remedy – the opium through his

opium pipes. Hence she adopts the habit of opium, because it was the thing which contributes as a remedy for her to recover everyday troubles of nights. Dimple promised Lee to rebury him in China after his death. “She was learning to live with pain. It was always there, on her shoulders and her back. The opium reduced it to something manageable, but she woke with pain” (63). Besides intoxication ‘forgetting’ is a social process of frustration and suppression, because all transgenders sustain their pain and suffocation inside their own personal premises. She says: “Forgetfulness was a gift, a talent to be nurtured” (57). ““Best. Forget is best’. ‘Why remember and make yourself sad?’” (67). She also believes in fate, ghosts, and bad luck. She says: “If this made her doubly a eunuch there was nothing she could do to change it. It was Fate” (76). Thayil portrays Dimple as a distinct character. Though she faces many problems in her life she never wants to die. She used to say, “I don’t want to die” (199).

Sex and drugs are the prime factors for earning money in the city like Bombay. It became a part of life, which could not be separated. But for Dimple, it is totally different. Dimple said that she is doing such work only for money. She says, “The only incredible thing in the world was money and the mysterious ways in which it worked” (39). And as like other eunuchs Dimple also has the fond of looking good. “She thought: If I lose my looks I don’t want to live. I don’t want to be like the tai whose only joy in life is money” (130).

Dimple got various changes in her own body after coming to the Hijra’s brothel. This was explained by Thayil. One day while taking opium she realized that her arms were getting longer. Though her gonadectomy was not done by a doctor it was done in a very cruel way by the people of the Hijra’s brothel as like, the emasculation method of ancient Imperial China. An article by Marcelo Duhalde talks

about the emasculation process. In Imperial China the process of emasculation was done in a small hut near the Forbidden City, called a Ch'ang tzu. A daozi jiang, or "knifer", was responsible for the castration throughout the process, including the healing stage. The local anaesthetic during the late Qing dynasty was hot chilli sauce. The parts to be removed were disinfected by washing them three times in hot pepper water. The surgeon would approach with a small, slightly curved blade in his hand. Facing the prospective eunuch, he would ask: "Will you regret it or not?". If the man showed any doubt, the operation would be haunted. But if he gave his consent, the knife was put to work. Both, the scrotum and the penis were removed generally with a single slash. But in Dimple's case they did not ask anything to Dimple. Without knowing if she was willing to do or not. They simply castrate in a brutal way. They gave opium as anaesthesia to forget her pain and poured hot oil as a medicine to stop the bleeding of her wound. But this time she did not want to risk her life. So she went to the real doctor.

He told her that the lengthening of her arms was a biological change brought about by her gelding. He said You were castrated so young there have been hormonal spikes in your physiology. In a way, the growth of your arms is a compensation for the profound change a human system can experience short of dying. (63)

Dimple thought that if her arms get longer she can make pipes easily. The doctor examines her without touching her. "He didn't touch her at all, not even to shake hands . . . but he washed his hands with soap at a sink near his desk" (64). The doctor trespasses the doctrine ethic from his profession by treating Dimple with untouchable way, only due to her transgender as identity.

Dimple became the heroine of hijra's brothel. She was a compassionate listener who hears everyone's grief. She was a good and kind natured eunuch. Though she is the lover of the den she has hatred towards Xavier, because he was the one who uses the word 'eunuch' to address her and she thinks that it was a word to disparage her. He was the one who had a violent sex with her and who always reminded her of her intrinsic male nature. Though she was an androgynous, loves to wear trousers and finds some sort of comfort in wearing the trousers. "It allowed her to act like a man when she wanted to" (57) but she hates when Xavier talking about the surgery to pee like a man. She did not want to talk about him. She expressed her hatred towards him by saying the words: "To speak of evil is to invite it into your life" (46).

After the death of Lee, Dimple comes to Rashid, the opium den owner of Shuklaji Street. She got a job there as opium pipe maker and many used her body too. She became the lover of Rashid. He has affection for Dimple and he takes her out occasionally to movies and all. To mark her new situation, he renamed her as, "Zeenat", the name of his favorite movie character and also insists her to wear burkha whenever she goes out. As a prostitute she was good at wearing saris and knows how to expose her intimate parts. Though there is nothing glorifying or satisfying, Dimple is quite happy to stay with Rashid in the beginning. She liked to wear burkha, she feels something very different and thinks her eye or mouth became tremendous and powerful while wearing burkhas. She varied her costume depending on who she wanted to be a Hindu or Muslim, as Dimple or Zeenat. Dimple moves from brothel to Rashid's home to find out better future but she crashed out from the track by the new drug of choice in the city.

Dimple is an emotional and good person as described in the novel, in spite of her gruesomeness'. She is a sweet, tender, silence and adorable person with antique

“tart-with-a-heart” (28). Dimple also understands the situation of society and adapts with those indifferences next she leads her life as such recognition. Dimple exaggerated the reality of transgender isolations and sufferings. She also understood the exact nature of Janice’s suffering. To know if one is unloved by his/her parents, it is a wound that would never heal. Dimple did not forget her early life could change this fundamental fact. She was always under the sway of it. It never went away. She would think she was okay, but she was not. If she was not sleeping enough or if she was anxious, it would catch up with her, as fresh and wet and red as it had ever been.

In the movie scene when brother and sister are finally reunited in a village in Kathmandu, Dimple made no effort to hide her tears. Others were crying too, men and women, entire families weeping together as they munched their popcorn and sucked noisily at bottles of Thumps Up and Fanta. Out of hallucination Dimple dreams of a house she had never lived in and of a family she did not know.

Dimple enjoyed Dom, the narrator who posed numerous inquiries. She comprehended there was just a thin veil that isolated one from ones dreams:

On the other side of the mirror, our hands are resting against the glass, trying to touch your face. Only a veil separates us from you, a transparent veil as flimsy as the one that separates you from your dreams. If you want to talk to us you only have to dip your hand beneath the surface of the water. (20)

Before leaving the city he makes his last effort to save Dimple in dropping her in the rehab centre, better known as “Safer”. The new life at Safer was governed by the clock. There she took the pills and tried to live through detox from the drugs. The medicine made her hallucinate so heavily and for four or five days she suffered from pain, panic and diarrhoea.

The portrayal of Dimple's character by Thayil is related to some of the protagonists of the transgender literature, from the year 1993 to 2014. Leislie Feinberg's semi-autobiographical novel, *Stone Butch Blues* (1993) talks about the protagonist Jess, who undergoes pain and trauma like Dimple. She is also related to Dimple for being bold as she says:

I didn't want to be different, I longed to be everything grownups wanted, so they would love me. I followed all their rules, tried my best to please. But there was something about me that made them knit their eyebrows and frown. No one ever offered a name for what was wrong with me. That's what made me afraid it was really bad. I only came to recognize its melody through its constant refrain: Is that a boy or a girl? (13)

In Kate Bornstein's *Gender Outlaw* the protagonist Kate says, "I know I'm not a man... and I've come to the conclusion that I'm probably not a woman; either..... The trouble is, we're living in a world that insists we be one or the other" (1). In Julia Serano's *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity*, the author writes about trans-sexuality from her unique perspective. She sees trans-women as being in a distinctively powerful position because of their experiences with living as a male and as a female.

Susan Stryker in her *Transgender History* says:

Because "transgender" is a word that has come into widespread use only in the past decades, its meaning are still under construction. I use it in this book to refer to people who refer to move away from the gender they were assigned at birth, people who cross over (trans-) the

boundaries constructed by their culture to define and contain that gender. (1)

Dimple becomes the scapegoat to a brute society that denies her identity and right to life. In the beginning she served the industry by producing high quality opium. In course of time as the market crashes, she is stripped off her livelihood and place to live by the same industry. She lends the novel the proverbial silver lining in the otherwise overpowering dark clouds that have been purposefully made to overcast in the entire plot. Despite the bleakness of her surroundings, she continues to search for beauty in all places surrounding her at the movies, in pulp magazines, and even in a new burka-wearing identity. It is through Dimple's eyes that the reader is able to see the layered vision of something as elemental in the novel as,

Drugs are a bad habit, so why do it? Because, said Dimple, it isn't the heroin that we're addicted to, it's the drama of the life, the chaos of it, that's the real addiction and we never get over it; and because when you come down to it, the high life, that is, the intoxicated life, is the best of the limited options we are offered. (231)

Thayil, effectively captures the complexity of the collective minds of almost all characters in the novel Dimple has had any interaction with.

As time passes Dimple's name changes, as did Bombay's and other identities were lost in the harsh new world. Thayil has no hesitation in talking about these things which could kill the image of India on a global level. Literary critic Nirmal Verma defines this novel as a dark one. He says, "a body of literary fiction which seems to have found a niche in the market, writing as it does of the underbelly of Indian society: its slums, poverty, deprivation, and destitution" (2).

Jeet Thayil even portrays this in his own beautiful way that we find sympathy in our hearts for these characters and through Dimple's insight we hear the echo of Judith Butler who, in *Gender Trouble*, states that, 'gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or "a natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive," [...] a politically neutral surface on which culture acts' (9).

The boldness, clear cut knowledge, best commanding sense makes the character Dimple to stand unique in the mind of the readers. Dimple did not get any care or pity from any one at her young age. She never pondered about it in turn she herself became the care giver to the people who need the real care like Mr. Lee. The next chapter depicts how the protagonist and other characters in the novel, become addicted for drug and alcohol which spoils their real life.

Chapter Three

Loss of Life

Jeet Thayil, has a thorough knowledge of drugs. Interestingly the writer was a drug addict himself for a long period of life. He has spoken often of the years he lost to alcoholism and drug addiction. This is certainly not the first book written about the drugs. Neither Thayil is the first writer to take drugs. In the history of English Literature, a good number of classical authors who took drugs and their works either influenced by the drugs or somehow related to the drugs. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, John Keats, Thomas de Quincey were some among the classical authors who took opium before writing their works.

Narcopolis is a languorous tale of opium dens and heroin addiction in Mumbai, which reveals the complexities and contradictions of Indian life. In this novel *Narcopolis*, all his characters are addicted to opium, violence, sex, or religion. He created his characters to explore the various addictions that afflict the human condition. He calls *Narcopolis* as ‘the secret history’ of the Bombay city, in which he explains how the Bombay city is considered to be haven for drugs, poverty and prostitution. He begins the novel as “Bombay which obliterated its own history by changing its name and surgically altering its face, is the hero or heroin of this story” (1). The opening lines declare the city as the main “heroin” of the story, revealing through this subtle wordplay how Bombay in the 1970s – now Mumbai – emerges as the main protagonist as well. Though it dealt with drugs it is not a typical drugs book, like William S. Burroughs’.

Thayil tells the history of Mumbai through the lives of people who frequent an opium den, the “lowest of the low”. In an interview with Nilima Pathak, he confesses that he had been an alcoholic and a drug addict who wasted 20 years of his life sitting

in bars and opium dens talking about writing and not writing, a time he terms “embedded research”. He struggled to overcome his addiction. In many interviews he says that he had tried many times to quit, without success but he kept trying, and finally succeeded at the age of 42.

The readers compare *Narcopolis* to Thomas de Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* or William Burroughs’s *Naked Lunch*. While asking about this to Thayil in an interview by Anita Felcelli he says that,

Like everybody else, I’ve had different influences at different stages. During the writing of *Narcopolis* it wasn’t drug literature I was reading, I finished with that in my teens and early twenties. I was reading the Russians, particularly Dostoyevsky, and most particularly *The Brothers Karamazov*. In some ways, *Narcopolis* is a Russian novel, in other ways it is American. But only an Indian could have written it. (n.pag)

He also says that he used drugs in his novel as a hanger to portray his multi-varied characters and to draw the social life of Bombay. The novel captures characters from almost all sections of the society to portray the marginalised, the addicted and deranged and people who are routinely called the lowest of the low.

In this novel he also talks about “Dreams” in various places. In an interview with Afia Aslam, he states the reason behind using dreams. He says:

Dreams were a fundamental element in the formal structure of *Narcopolis*. I researched dreams when I wrote this book, because

that's what opium does: it opens up the gates of dreams until your dreams leak into real life. During the writing of it I asked everybody I knew to tell me their dreams and if they told me something interesting I'd use it. I began to feel like a thief of dreams. (n.pag)

The novel begins when the narrator reaches at Bombay in 1970s. He shows how the city is polluted there by saying,

The city belongs to the politicians and the crooks and some of the politicians are more crooked than most of the crooks. Garad sales are protected, it doesn't matter that it comes from Pakistan. They'll make speeches about Mussulmans and burn our homes and shops but this is a multi-crore business and in Bumbai money is the only religion. (199)

He describes each character whom he met is an addict in some way and the aim of these characters are different from one another. The novel sustains an ambivalent relationship with narcotics. This ambiguity regarding opium and heroin underpins the psychological profiling of *Narcopolis*'s characters.

The protagonist of the novel Dom Ullis, a Syrian Christian from Kerala, is deported from New York to Bombay for the crime of the possession of drugs. He narrates how he began to use drugs. He says:

I'd just begun work at a pharmaceutical company where my job was to proofread the house newsletter. It was dull business. I spent long hours correcting articles on the umbrella benefits of broad-spectrum antibiotics, or the latest research in the treatment of fungal complaints. But the job put me in lovely proximity to high-grade narcotics. I had

access to government-controlled morphine, to sleeping pills, painkillers, synthetic opiates, to all kinds of fierce prescription downers. . . . It helped me forget that I was opium sick. (35)

Dimple (a hijra) is the central character of the novel who works at both the brothel and the opium den in the world of Shukalji Street. She was introduced to drugs by a Chinese refugee, Mr. Lee. Though, initially it acts as a way for her to manage the physical pain of castration: eventually, it becomes her mode of survival.

Newton Xavier is a postmodern painter who visits Bombay often for the exhibition of his works and for various speeches. He has the belief that people get addicted to substances as they find solace which they continuously search in their lives. His pithy statements about rich, poor and addicts played a significant role in this novel. He says: "Only the rich can afford surprise and or irony" (39) and the poor, "All they can afford is laughter and ghosts" (40). According to him everything is controlled by money and power. He further says:

Then there are the addicts, the hunger addicts and the rage addicts and power addicts and power addicts, and the pure addicts who are addicted not to substances but to the oblivion and tenderness that substances engender. An addict is like a saint. (40)

And his sayings about addicts are sufficient nourishment for those who inclined to think philosophically.

Rashid is the owner of the opium den which is also called as khana. Rashid's khana becomes the location that condenses the appearance of Garad heroin into a single and microcosmic setting. It is the place where men gather to smoke opium from

an antique Chinese pipe; there are the endless shops where cocaine and black-market whiskey are procured; there is the strange intermingling in the air of longing, charred flesh and sweetness.

Khalid who involved himself in drugs approached Rashid about transforming his opium den and brothel into a place for cocaine by saying, “Garad is the future of the business” (150). Rashid refuses it. He says: “Garad separates the strong from the weak; it brings out the worst in the man and the best” (151). With the help of the government officials and corrupted police Khalid closed Rashid’s den. Hence Rashid kidnapped Khalid’s son. “It took a little less than a week for Rashid to reopen his shop”(181). So he returned Khalid’s son safely.

Rumi is one of the customers of Dimple who shares his experience with her. Since he is unable to get any proper work, becomes a taxi driver and a drug addict. The reason for his addiction as he himself says to Dimple is the frustration with life. Rumi’s married life is stained because of his poverty. He seeks pleasures from outside. Finally, he also admitted in the rehab center but it believed that he is killed by the stone killer.

Other minor characters include a Bengali old man who was a government clerk once and became Rashid’s accountant. Pagal Kutta, was the most incompetent pipeman in the khana. Pathar Maar the stone killer who worked at nights without differentiating between the poor and the rich, adults and children. All these characters are all addicted to drugs. Jeet Thayil’s perception on the character, Bengali is said in the novel as: “He shared the regional affliction that Bengalis were prone to, the conviction that they were the most aristocratic and talented people in the world” (147). It is quite ironical that even the drug addicts

have their own principles. Bengali had been with Rashid since the early days "when Rashid was a tapori selling charas near Grand Road Station" (145).

Narcopolis explores the lowest of the low of our country. In 1980 Rashid is approached by Khalid about transforming his opium den and brothel into a place for cocaine. "There used to be thirty-six chandu khanas on Shuklaji Street ... now mine is the last one, perhaps the last one in the whole city... you'll think it's the last chandu khana on earth. And it too will soon be gone" (217).

As cocaine comes onto the scene in force opium supplies like Salim begin lacing the opium with highly poisonous substance to give it a more potent kick and to beat out opium. But the hard lifestyle of those in the slums finally begin to catch up to them.

To speak up about the pernicious effects of garad, Thayil uses Salim to spell out for the reader the mechanics of the industry: 'Garad, you know what it means in Urdu? waste. This is the unrefined shit they throw away when they make good-quality maal for junkies in rich countries' (199). This garad or second-grade Pakistani heroin is, in turn, further adulterated to produce 'Chemical' which becomes 'the future of the business' (150). The addictiveness of this toxic heroin is instantaneous and 'suddenly it seemed as if everybody had switched to powder, the customers, the pipe-men, even Rashid, who hated it but smoked all the same' (180).

Dom decides to leave the city, Bombay. Dimple realizes that she will die if she stays in Bombay, so she begs Dom to take her with him. He was the one who let Dimple into a rehab place called safer. Safer is also attended by Rumi who has divorced his wife and since then lost everything. "It was more businesslike, as if

they were weighing her for meat, guessing how much she would fetch in the market" (200).

Rashid's son, Jamal takes over the business of his father, transforming the den into a serious call Centre and hub of operations for drug sales "with cash in his pocket and the shortest commute in the world" (135). Rashid fat and old regret only not having gone with cocaine and the den when he had the chance.

The arrival of the new drug is simply another herald of the decadence in Bombay signaling a drastic change for the people worded their religion on faces. Many opium dens are closed. The fights and fires became exalted. At one point Dimple is saved by dressing herself as a Christian. Jamal is also saved by addressing Dimple as his mother. "The police and the dogs, it seemed to her, were always the first to smell trouble and disappear" (200). There was nothing to be afraid of because nothing really mattered.

The powder hit the back of my nose with a hard chemical burn, and, in an instant, my knees dissolved in the anhydride rush that disconnects neurons from nerve endings, obliterates bone and tissue, and removes anxiety by removing all possibility of pain. I thought: If pain is the thing shared by all living creatures, then I'm no longer human or animal or vegetal; I am unplugged from the tick of metabolism; I am mineral. (219)

The true image of the city is portrayed in narrator's words when he decided to leave Bombay for good reason. The narrator returns to Bombay after ten years but he is not able to find the old place as everything is changed there. The city which once welcomes all to fulfil their desires is now divided in the name of

religion, caste, regions and so on. And it is this reason the narrator speaks – “I lost track of time, I could have been anyone, I lost myself, which is the reason people like me get into drugs in the first place” (211). He met Rashid. He says: “The city has changed, people wear their religion in their faces” (216). Finally he meets Jamal who is how the sellers of cocaine and says that nothing had truly changed. Rashid was once shocked to find his son smoking and he shouted "Six years old and you are on the street, fucking and smoking" (143). Rashid tells him of the others death after his leave . "The boy had a way of appearing without making a sound, materializing from nowhere with his eyes wide and his hand extended" (135).

Then Dom asks him to bring home some old things from the den as souvenirs , including an opium pipe . Dom was surprised by his thinness, "the expression of unreachability on his face" (277) and noted that his charisma was gone. He intends to turn them into a museum exhibit , or so he tells Rashid . Rashid says: "Put our shame on display, so the people understand the lowest of the low, prostitutes and criminals and drug addicts, people with no faith in God or man, no faith in anything except the truth of their own senses" (288). At his apartment , Dom smokes the opium pipe and it is revealed the entire book has been only one of his opium dreams.

Narcopolis can thus be read as a symbolic site of resistance against the growing rise of intolerance in India. In this light, Dimple, a hijra who prepares opium pipes at Rashid's khana, becomes the novel's focus as regards the alternative model of practical identities. Taking the name from Bollywood actress Dimple Kapadia, Thayil's narrative mentions the 1973 film Bobby in which Kapadia de'buted as the daughter of a poor Christian fisherman who falls in love with the son of a rich Hindu

businessman. Set in Bombay, the referencing of Bobby echoes Thayil's own nostalgia for an India that sought to transgress communalism.

Thayil also portrayed the shift towards fundamentalism perceived in the streets of present-day Mumbai is voiced by Rashid who laments that, "The city has changed, people wear their religion on their faces. As a Muslim I feel unwanted in many places" (217). The novel looks at addiction as the ultimate freedom; a freedom that includes 'fucking themselves up, because that was the real meaning of freedom' (244).

Narcopolis is not a novel about the hell of heroin addiction. The focus is more on opium and the narrator goes to certain lengths to distinguish between afeem and the new garad. The former is clearly situated within a specific cultural context and taking 'God's own medicine' is seen as a pleasurable activity. Rashid explains to Dom, "The old word for opium. You lie back, someone makes your pipe, you take your time, you enjoy" (215).

On the whole, the novel *Narcopolis*, seems like an 'unstructured' novel and talks about a group of characters whose only aim in life is to get high, underneath we find poignant reflections on questions of belonging.

In this novel, obsessions are compared to addiction as they result in: a loss of family dynamics, a sense of self hatred, and a devaluing of human life, all of which are detrimental to the societies function. Second of all, in the novel, the characters that are obsessed with anything in particular, tend to lose value for themselves as well. Some characters attempt to commit suicide, others despise seeing other people who are similar to them, but in one way shape or form they show distaste for themselves or someone who is similar to them. Finally the largest point, when characters have an obsession for something they begin to lose the value of other human lives. Whether

that means they wouldn't care if someone dies, or it means they would use other people to get what they want, and it also could mean that anyone who doesn't think like you is lesser, but in one way shape or form you will value human lives less. And the ultimate damage this causes to society is that it creates more distrust within society as family is normally the most trustworthy group of an individual in society, and thus will severely damage trust in other humans due to the greatest trust already being broken.

The final effect of obsession is its tendency to make an individual devalue themselves. They can devalue themselves because they can't obtain what they obsess over, they can devalue themselves by despising what they obsess and thus hate seeing it in others, and finally it can affect an individual far in the future as they look back onto their obsession permanently affecting them. When Rashid says to his son "six years old and you're on the street fucking smoking" (143), thus showing that although he ultimately is obsessed with sex and drugs, he hates it to a point that he doesn't want to see the innocent begin doing what he did. Finally when everything is calmed down, even after all the drug dens are down and addictions were controlled Rashid still hates himself. To conclude, obsessions can cause self hatred and thereby create problems of depression within the society which is another severe detriment to the society due to lowering the overall wellbeing of the people inside.

Hence, when a society is too stuck in its obsessions the people become addicts and the individuals within a society begin to devalue human life. Their families get broken. Because of all the negative traits that come with obsessions, it is quite obvious that a society should try its best to have a balanced life instead of major obsessions that cause major problems within the society. The next chapter highlights the author's use of wordplay in the novel.

Chapter Four

Diction: A Medium of Art

Jeet Thayil's first debut novel *Narcopolis* is set in Bombay. The title refers to a city of narcotics. The word Narcopolis is a portmanteau of the words 'Narco' and 'Polis'. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the word 'Narco' is an informal word for narcotics or illegal drugs while the word 'Polis' has Greek origin which means the city state in ancient Greece. The word "Narcopolis" is very similar to the word "necropolis", can create a confusion, that means a large designed cemetery with elaborate tomb monuments. The name stems from the Ancient Greek nekropolis, literally meaning "The city of dead". The polis of the title refers to metropolis Bombay, which in Thayil's words, has obliterated its history by changing its name. The novel has two narrators: Pipe and Dom. In the prologue itself he confirms it by saying, "I'm not human, I'm a pipe of O telling this story" (6). The man and the pipe the who and the who telling this story about a long-ago time, when I smoked a pyali" (4).

In an article *The Guardian*, Thayil speaks about his subjective and objective reasons for entitling his novel as Narcopolis. He says:

I thought of the people I used to know as Nacro Polos, voyagers into the unknown, who seldom returned whole or alive; because I was living on Cemetery Road and it seemed to me I was living in a city of the dead; and because this title suggested another, a hidden title, Necropolis. (n.pag)

The cover page of the book is so well designed that it clearly shows the smoke coming out of the pipe relevant to dreams of the person and also the side

effects of the smoke in the form of snake ‘King Cobra’ whose venom is so poisonous that no one can be escaped from its effect. It also shows the dual personality of the person which clearly resembles with the thought process inside the mind after and before intake of the drugs.

An epigraph is a phrase, quotation or poem that is set at the beginning of a document or a component. The epigraph may serve as a preface, as a summary, as a counter-example, or to link the work to a wider literary canon, either to invite comparison or to enlist a conventional context. Thayil begins the book with beautiful epigraph from the *Holy Quran*.

We made the whole earth a couch for you,
And the mountains its bent stakes,
We created you of two sexes,
And ordained your sleep for rest.

Sura LXXVIII

As per the epigraph, the novel contains conversations about sexes and the conversations are mostly explained in relation to the hijra, Dimple.

Thayil has written an episodic, phantasmagorical account of the drug life. The story- or network of stories, for the novel is formed of several interconnected narrative, each focussing on different characters and revolving around Rashid’s opium den.

Bombay is the first and last word of the novel. Almost every work on *Narcopolis* will testify to the phenomenon of the building of this cityscape of Bombay. He begins by saying, “Bombay, which obliterated its own history by changing its name and surgically altering its face, is the hero or heroin of this story”

(1). Similarly by saying, “This is the story the pipe told me. All I did was write it down, one word after the other, beginning and ending with the same one, Bombay” (292).

Dr. T. K. Pius in his essay, “The Thematic and Narrative features of Jeet Thayil” explored the thematic and narrative styles employed in *Narcopolis*. He says:

It treads a neater narrative line, but is no less adventurous in its exploration of story and place. This is Old Bombay, as seen from the slums and the gutter, the city illuminated in all its sweat and temper, stories lifting from the streets like the smoke from an opium pipe. (3)

The novel has a prologue titled ‘Something for the Mouth’. The peculiar thing about this prologue is its first sentence, which spills over seven pages containing 2294 words making it one of the longest sentences in the English Literature. The sentence is written without semicolons. The author sets a rule for readers that it is not a typical Indian novel and the reader must prepare oneself to encounter such oddities throughout the novel. Another peculiarity in the novel is the wordplay and the usage of pun. “When I stitched the blue smoke from pipe to blood to eye to I and out into the blue world”(1). In which the author makes a pun on the word ‘I’ personal pronoun and ‘eye’ the organ of human body.

The novel begins as, “Bombay, which obliterated its own history by changing its name and surgically altering its face, is the hero or heroin of this story” (1). The word ‘heroin’ has two meaning in this opening sentence of the novel, indicating both a protagonist and a substance. Heroin also suggests the historic change in the business of intoxication as it overthrows the age old queen of delirium, opium. This rambling introduction of the novel in the form of ‘Prologue’ provides us with a glimpse of

what's to come in terms of narrative structures, in terms of the tumultuous, ever changing but never resting Bombay in which the book is set.

Thayil's portrayal of untold narrator at the beginning is peculiar in its way, to make the reader stick on to the novel. He says: "I'm the one who's telling it and you don't know who I am, let me say that we'll get to the who of it but not right now" (1).

The prologue sets the tone of the novel with the disturbing imagery of sickness, dirt, brothels and murders.

One afternoon, I took a taxi through roads mined with garbage, with human and animal debris, and the poor, everywhere the poor and deranged stumbled in their rags or stood and stared, and I saw nothing out of the ordinary in their bare feet and air of abandonment, I smoked a pipe and I was sick all day, hearing whispers in my stone sleep about the Pathar Maar, the stone killer, who worked the city at night, whispers that leaked upward from the poor, how he patrolled the working-class suburbs of Sion and Koliwada and killed them while they slept, approached those who slept alone, crept up to them in the night and killed them, but no one noticed because his victims were more than poor, they are invisible entities without names or papers or families, and he killed them carefully, a half-dozen murdered men and women, pavement people of the north-central suburbs, where the streets are bordered by effluents and sludge and oily green shimmer, and all that year he was an underworld whisperer, unknown to the city's upper classes. (2)

By his sayings it is clear how dirt the Bombay is and how the rich and poor were treated there. Besides these he also talks about drugs and its side effects. He said, “I found Bombay and opium, the drug and the city, the city of opium and the drug Bombay” (7). He also talks about dreams while in an interview with Afia Aslam. He says:

Dreams were a fundamental element in the formal structure of *Narcopolis*. I researched dreams when I wrote this book, because that’s what opium does: it opens up the gates of dreams until your dreams leak into real life. During the writing of it I asked everybody I knew to tell me their dreams and if they told me something interesting I’d use it. I began to feel like a thief of dreams. (1)

The character he met in the Bombay also talks about dreams. While Rashid and Dimple having a conversation in Dimple’s room. Dimple says:

Dreams leak from head to head; they travel between those who face in the same direction, that is to say lovers, and those who share the bonds of intoxication and death. That’s why the old Chini’s head is in mine. I’m dreaming Dimple’s dream and I want to stop but I don’t know how. The beggar woman is dead and Dimple too is dead and I deserve to die for fucking the dead. (187)

And in the prologue the narrator says that, “the dreams which aren’t dreams but conversations” (6) and similarly in the end of the novel he says, “I dreamt it was twenty years earlier” (266).

Halfway into an earlier draft of *Narcopolis*, Thayil hit upon this distinct aesthetic configuration which was capable of transmitting the sensation of an opium

trance. This 'find' reconfigured everything Thayil had written up until that moment, and the outcome was that the book's new form lent a dreamtime quality to the narrative. This template for the book's poesis is found in the prologue, where the reader is told that,

On the other side of the mirror, our hands are resting against the glass,
trying to touch your face. Only a veil separates us from you, a
transparent veil as flimsy as the one that separates you from your
dreams. If you want to talk to us you only have to dip your hand
beneath the surface of the water. (20)

The novel contains the elements of magical realism. The term magical realism is self-contradictory because magic and realism cannot go together. Thayil's portrayal of the characters somehow related to magical realism. In fact, the narrator himself is in the mood of magical realism.

We're getting to the who of it and I can tell you that I, the you're
imagining at this moment, a thinking someone who's writing these
words, who's arranging time in a logical chronological sequence,
someone with an overall plan, an engineer-god in the machine. (1)

. Thayil uses a language that is filled with graphic sexual imagery and violence to portray a side of life that exists on the footpath, merging with dust, sharing needles, and crumbling beneath the starry dynamo, which doesn't shield or hide when you roll up the tinted glasses of your air-conditioned car, in a bad part of town. The sentiment and apathy of most of his characters is infectious, poisonous, drug-induced, stained by semen, and diseased by junk. "This chooth country, cunt country, how the fuck are you supposed live here without drugs?" (213), goes one particular rant about how the entire nation is run by conniving, cheating and murderous communities out to each

other, all apart from Bombay. It also gives you a glimpse of a man, a former addict, whose own experiences crawl and slip under the mask of his characters like smoke, who survived and suffered a long time ago from being burnt or consumed by dancing too close to the flame. In the corresponding real world, the language of the gangsters is certainly full of cuss words. In using this type of language Thayil has portrayed the true picture of the underworld. The frustration of characters is well capsulated with that language.

In *Narcopolis*, Thayil integrates Hindi, Urdu and Marathi, both in the conversations between the characters and within the narrative discourse. This code switching is done with no in-line translation and such a constant use of diverse linguistic codes creates a centrifugal effect within the writing. The technique captures the hybrid reality of modern India; a linguistic mix which the book's narrator calls 'Bambayya', and it is at this level that the text also transmits the violence, sexual depravity and grotesqueness that has been, up to the present, largely absent from contemporary Indian writing.

The seven-page prologue 'Something for the Mouth' was the original piece that opened the door to this new form and, in this respect, it showcases the novel's original narrative style. Dom Ellis, the book's narrator, must keep smoking his pipe to keep "the O boat sailing on its treacle tide" (7).

The book's form draws repeated attention to the question of memory, its reliability, which is linked to the narcotic state of mind. Mnemosyne was not only the goddess of memory but also the mother of the Muses and the novel's central inspiration lies in the reconstruction of Bombay through the act of recollection.

May be I is, may be the O is the I and I is unreliable, my memory like blotting paper, my full-of-holes, porous, shreddable non-memory,

remembering details from thirty years ago but this morning a blank,
and if memory = pain = being human, I'm not human. (6)

Dom Ellis's action as smoking from the same opium pipe is the generator of this story. Ellis complains that his memory "'is like blotting paper' and he is thus 'unreliable'" (6). Further on in the novel we are also told that the hijra, Dimple, 'had no memories at all: perhaps she was stealing other people's because she had none of her own' (240). So, herein lies the novel's central conundrum; Thayil has something very poignant to say, a point we shall discuss in detail below, yet the narrative continues to play with the idea that what is being told is simply an opium dream subject to unreliable memory. In his telling of the 'story about a long-ago time', Ellis, like many renaissance actors, must reconstruct all these events from his own, sometimes from his faulty memory.

Like Thomas De Quincey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Burroughs, Ellis uses opium to stimulate the recall of these memories and, for this reason, he makes the distinction between 'the two I machines, the man and the pipe' (4). These two identities, however, merge into one, "I've tried to separate the one from the other, or not, because now I'm giving in, I'm not separating but connecting, I'm giving in to the lovely stories" (7).

Viktor Shklovsky, in *The Theory of Prose*, argues that, the core of a text is not the theme but its devices and it is applicable to Thayil's *Narcopolis*. The theme in the novel is not merely a postmodern device that showcases Thayil's aesthetic form, but the aesthetic conceits are complementary to the themes in hand.

The novel also contains a strong dystopian energy as regards its oppositional standpoints on corruption, the curtailing of civil liberties, religious fanaticism and so on. As Terry Eagleton in his book, *Ideology: An Introduction* reminds us, the

subversive potential of the aesthetics can be located in its uncontrollable nature, and dystopic literature in particular can explore alternative ways in which a society can define itself through its imaginative visions of that society's potential ills.

Keith Booker affirms in his *Dystopian Literature: A Theory and Research Guide*. States that, “dystopian fiction is more like the projects of social and cultural critics: Nietzsche, Freud, Bakhtin, Adorno, Foucault, Althusser [and this] parallels the rather dark turn taken by a great deal of modern cultural criticism” (5).

Within this frame, Thayil centres his criticism on the city of ‘Bombay’, a term he prefers over ‘Mumbai’ as he feels that the Bombay of the 1980s embodied a spirit of religious tolerance and freedom of expression which is subsequently dying out in the city. Furthermore, he laments that the millenarian cultural practice of opium smoking in the Bombay khana or opium den has been eradicated by a global narcotics syndicate.

Dom portrayed religions like Hindu, Muslim and Christian as ghosts to explain the pathetic state of Bombay. He further narrates the events which led Dom to leave New York city, pondered over the failed Planned Socialist State of India, reflected on the caste-ridden society of India. He says:

I mean the particular way Christianity caught in Kerala and how Kerala's Hindus instead of adjusting themselves to Christianity, adjusted Christianity to themselves, to the old caste divisions, and, this is my question, would Jesus have approved of caste-conscious Christianity when his entire project was the removal of it, a man who fraternized with the poor, with fishermen, lepers and prostitutes, the sick and dying, women, his pathology and compulsion to espouse the

lowest of the low, his message being God's unconditional love, whatever one's social standing? (4)

Thayil portrays the true picture of drug – ridden city in his own style. He also includes use of various graphic scenes and strong language. There are many diversions in this novel. The characters in the novel can envision their future. The supposed time travelling appears very much genuine. Thus the book stands as a hallmark of post modernism and the differences between modernism and postmodernism has been handled by Thayil in a diligent manner. The next chapter sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceeding chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

Jeet Thayil is a writer who has led an interesting, intense and challenging life. He has spoken often of the years he lost to alcoholism and drug addiction. In 2002, after he was diagnosed with the hepatitis C virus, he quit his job as a journalist in New York and moved back to India began to write this novel and he dedicated this novel to the virus Hepatitis C. He combines rich and densely realised work of imagination with a dark and offbeat sensibility, emotional honesty and verbal artistry while mining so much out of his own experiences. He calls himself a “Slow writer”, in an interview with Suparna Dutt-D’Cunha, because it took five years to complete this novel *Narcopolis*. It is a semi-autobiographical debut novel, which tells the “secret history” of Bombay through the lives of a beautiful eunuch prostitute, an elderly Chinese man, a violent businessman, a postmodern artist, and others who frequent an opium den on Shuklaji Street.

Thayil, always focusses on flawed beings — tackling characters with sheer playfulness and deadly seriousness, identity and sex, redemption, and recording life in all its impurity, with an unnerving directness of tone. His works across the genres is noted for its innovative lyricism and the use of far-ranging influences and the creativity of his novel lies by the way he has crushed this whole universe into an opium nook in all its convincing lack of sanitization in the 1970s and '80s, with a cast of pushers, pimps, novelists, criminals and eunuchs.

In an interview to Anita Felicelli, he talked about the risk he came across while publishing this novel. He says:

David Godwin took me on when I first started working on the book, before I knew it would be a novel. (It started as non-fiction.) Almost every Indian publisher rejected the book, but Lee Brackstone at Faber grabbed it. Those were the most important pieces of luck that came my way, with my agent and editor. They were the champions of *Narcopolis*. (n.pag)

In an interview with Jeet Thayil, Suparna Dutt states that: To him, writing is not a therapy. “It does [heal], but only for about five minutes. Healing is a continuum. You have to keep at it”. And Thayil replied that: “I don’t know if I’m interested in writing as therapy though.” Burningly intense, he doesn’t even plot, plan and schematise his novels. “I am not the kind of writer who begins with a structure and plot, chapter outlines, character arcs, the last sentence written first. For me, writing a novel is like taking a raft on a swift river: you have no idea where it will go or when you will stop”.

The novel sets in early 1970s and in this novel he draws his own experiences as a drug addict, and what he calls the lost 20 years of his life. In an interview to Jaiman he says that, “It took him five years to complete the novel, and he called it “the opposite of catharsis. Catharsis gets stuff out of you. But this put bad feelings into me”” (n.pag). Thayil undoubtedly writes from close experience about that sordid world of pimps and prostitutes, drug addiction and sexual deviance, grotesque crime and heinous punishment. It fascinates as much as it shocks even as one might recoil in horror, knowing he would probably never set foot in Mumbai’s innards, yet one quite desire to know more about them.

When he was asked by ipshita mitra in an interview about How he had gone about his research on opium-induced Bombay in the 1970s and how much of him is spaced within the book, Thayil said, "All information, detailing, figures, characters, composition of chemicals were the byproducts of what I would like to call embedded research. The novel grew out of that period of embedded journalism, of my own days into addiction and intoxication". *Narcopolis* also tells a story about choices those who have them and those who don't. It takes place in India in the 1970s, when Mumbai was still called Bombay, and political and social turbulence reigned supreme.

The peculiarity about the novel is the prologue "Something for the Mouth" which runs for seven pages without any pause while asking about this by Anita Felicelli in an interview. He says,

The first sentence of *Narcopolis* came pretty late in the writing of the book. I knew I was running the risk of turning some readers off, but it was a risk I was willing to take. I also think it's possible to skip the prologue and not miss much in terms of narrative, if you are the kind of reader for whom narrative matters more than atmosphere, or language, or style. I've been a reader all my life, and plotline has always been secondary. It might be true that you end up writing for readers similar to yourself. (2)

Many of *Narcopolis*' characters are stripped naked of any moral centre; as subjects, most resist the conservative and communal ideologies of India's chauvinistic political and religious establishments. Smokers, alcoholics, drug addicts, are the ones people generally associate with bad obsessions or addictions. In this novel, obsessions

are compared to addiction as they result in: a loss of family dynamics, a sense of self hatred, and a devaluing of human life, all of which are detrimental to the societies function.

Throughout the novel, the characters that are far too obsessed with anything in particular, whether that be work, an ideology, or even a drug addiction, lose their families capacity to function. Signs of which can be seen by the obsessed treating family as objects, showing major signs of separation within the family, and sometimes even reaches the point where you would not be able to recognize when certain family members even know each other anymore. Second of all, in the novel, the characters that are obsessed with anything in particular, tend to lose value for themselves as well. Some characters attempt to commit suicide, others despise seeing other people who are similar to them, but in one way shape or form they show distaste for themselves or someone who is similar to them. Finally the largest point, when characters have an obsession for something they begin to lose the value of other human lives. Whether that means they wouldn't care if someone dies, or it means they would use other people to get what they want, and it also could mean that anyone who doesn't think like you is lesser, but in one way shape or form you will value human lives less.

The final effect of obsession is its tendency to make individuals devalue themselves. They can devalue themselves because they can't obtain what they obsess over, they can devalue themselves by despising what they obsess and thus hate seeing it in others, and finally it can affect an individual far in the future as they look back onto their obsession permanently affecting them. Obsessions can cause self hatred and thereby create problems of depression within the society and lower the overall wellbeing of the people inside which is another severe detriment to the society.

The jumble of genres and narratives in the novel is to certain extent an essential ingredient in a postmodern narrative. Scattered throughout narrative are references to other texts and other stories, which make the novel multi-layered. Books appear within dreams. The beginning of Book One, the nod takes Dom and he dreams he is visited by the spirit of deceased Dimple.

This dream's significance becomes clearer as the book unfolds. We begin to understand that these dream visitations may actually be from spirits, traversing time and space, to visit people who know them. Dimple tells Dom that her spirit is always there, just beyond a veil behind a mirror's reflection, or under the surface of water. Spirits hover nearby, she says, just waiting for someone to listen.

Thayil uses dreams as a technique. In an interview with Afia Aslam, he explain about it by saying,

It's not a question of not committing, because it's very clear where the author's feelings and opinions lie. I just find it more interesting as a reader to not be told what something is about. The minute I'm told, I'm no longer as interested. I want some things left unsaid, just hinted at. I want to do some work, as a reader. Dreams are a powerful way of commenting on characters, on events, without actually saying it in so many words. You leave it open, you leave it up to the reader to decide. It is a sort of works like poetry. As a poet, you work with the idea that less is more. I think that's what the power of it comes from. (2)

Dreams almost merge reality, "Only a veil separates us from you, a transparent veil as flimsy as the one that separates you from your dreams" (20). It is not important if dreams touch reality and facts for "You've got to face facts and the fact is life is a

joke, a fucking bad joke, or, no, a bad fucking joke" (22). Facts are like the clothes we wear. They are costumes and disguises. "The image has nothing to do with the truth. And what is truth? Whatever you want it to be. Men are women and women are men. Everybody is everything" (57).

Our sense of reality has this one feature. We are dogged by a constant thought, "Anything can happen to anyone at any time" (117). Dreams too are layered, and often contain important messages in the form of secrets or revelations of the future. "With the dreams came memories, or perhaps they weren't memories at all but fantasies she imagined were memories" (239).

Dreams of a character do not just remain within the head of the dreamer. Dimple's dream of Mr. Lee leaks into Rashid while they are having sex, and Rashid sees a dream vision of his own future which Dom later witnesses come to pass. These different dimensions of reality blend with one another. For instance, Dimple says of her memories of her mother that come to her when she is detoxing with the dreams came memories, or perhaps they weren't memories at all but fantasies she imagined were memories.

Memories contain pain like the way dreams contain lessons. Dimple's mother gave Dimple away at age seven or eight to the Tai at the brothel where Dimple is castrated, and where she spends many years of her life. Upon explaining what she can remember of her past to her new father, Mr. Lee, Dimple says: "Forget is best Why remember and make yourself sad?" (67).

From the above character analysis, it could be seen that *Narcopolis* is a novel of lost souls. These lost souls visit the others in their dreams or in their imagination, since that is the only place given to them. Ultimately everything comes down to

“choice”. The narrator has made his choice to reform himself. Even Dimple made the same choice but she yielded to opium in the end. When we analyse her character we cannot be this judgemental. Given her childhood and castration, no wonder she has chosen the path of oblivion to everything. Rashid has made choice of sticking to opium even though he could have made money otherwise. Mr. Lee made his choice of staying in India but to be buried in China. Every character faces this dilemma of choice.

The slippery nature of recollection is evident in Mr Lee’s response. Why remember when anyway you memory wrong, all wrong. Stories mix and meld into each other and states of reality are interwoven together. Indeed, flux, and the mixing, shifting, changing, defying, reincorporating of norms, expectations, cultures, languages, codes, stories, reality, etc., is central to the book, which intriguingly often departs from norms yet conforms to them at the same time.

Towards the end of the book, the city has changed with the passage of time. The technology has brought a change in communication. The drugs like opium and garad have been taken over by new drugs like “Cocaine and MDMA and Ecstasy, new drugs for the new Bombay” (281). There was overall drastic change in the city. In a way, the old has given way to the new. Rashid’s son, a self-righteous man, has started selling cocaine replacing his father’s business of opium.

Thayil concludes when a society is too stuck in its obsessions that they become like addictions, the individuals within a society begin to devalue human life, have their families broken, and also devalue themselves. because of all the negative traits that come with obsessions it is quite obvious that a society should try it's best to instead have a balanced life instead of major obsessions that cause major problems

within the society. There would be more kindness towards others, more healthy family and human relations, and also much lower rates of depression and suicide. The question now is what work will have to be done in order to lessen how people get obsessed with certain things, but it must be done in a way to not create any further obsessions itself. When that is done the society will be much greater than it started.

In an Interview with Thayil, the journalist Suparna Dutt-D'Cunha states that:

Though critics have sometimes been bewildered by his scope, he remains beguiled by the possibilities that come from stepping outside the self and inside. "For me, artistic intelligence is in the hands. You let your hands lead you to the sweet spot. The song or the story knows more than you do, and all you have to do is get out of the way and allow it to reveal itself," he says, in peerless high-mindedness. (n.pag)

The loss of the opium den and the decline of the opium business symbolically depict the decline of Old Bombay culture and a period of social, cultural and economic transition. The change from Bombay to Mumbai is a change from the quiet, glamorous and romantic world of opium to the quick, modern and degrading world of heroin, cocaine and ecstasy. The popularity of heroin also implies the historic change in the trade of intoxication as it overthrows the age old opium. On the one hand, the globalizing urge of the new world economy has subjected the city to postmodern strategies of urban development; while on the other hand, this very process of globalizing obliterates the traditional impulse. The city of Bombay remakes itself as Mumbai in the course of the novel. By reflecting upon the emerging postmetropolis, Thayil not only makes a nostalgic attempt to reclaim the city but, in the process, creatively recreates the city.

Thus Thayil, the 59-year-old Indian novelist and poet draws from his own life to populate his novels. The decades he spent in Mumbai, some in the drug-ridden underworld in the 1980s, gave birth to this novel, and he was sure enough that the novel won't stand as a model for drug literature. As a researcher the book inspired me to think about how life is to be lived.

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Crisis of Womanhood: A Sociocultural Reading of Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

By

VINICIYA. P

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PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2021

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Crisis of Motherhood	15
Three	Crisis of Patriarchal Hegemony	29
Four	Crisis of Culture	41
Five	Summation	51
	Works cited	58

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Crisis of Womanhood: A Sociocultural Reading of Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*** a novel submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Viniciya.P during the year 2019-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Ms. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Dr. S. Sudha Rani

Guide

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Crisis of Womanhood: A Sociocultural Reading of Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

Viniciya. P

April 2021

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Crisis of Womanhood: A Sociocultural Reading of Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*** highlights the sufferings of African women in the Patriarchal society. It leads to the realization that women should be freed from all the social and familial ties imposed on them.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Buchi Emecheta, her life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of her work and the novel chosen for the study.

The second chapter **Crisis of Motherhood** deals with the exploration on the plot of the novel and the crisis faced by a woman when she is unable to produce a child. It also explores how motherhood enslaves woman.

The third chapter **Crisis of Patriarchal Hegemony** exposes the oppression faced by a woman in African society which is chiefly patriarchal in nature. It also deals with the inferior status of women in the African society.

The fourth chapter **Crisis of Culture** concentrates on the cultural crisis a woman faces when she is unable to adapt to a new culture. It also explores the economical conflicts faced by women in new environment.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It also deals with the different levels of subjugation faced by woman and also presents the views employed by the writer and validates the study.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

African literature consists of various genres of works ranging from oral literature to literature written in colonial languages like French, Portuguese and English. Oral tradition comprises the specialized verbal art forms—proverbs, riddles, chants, lyric poetry, tales, myths, legends, and epics—through which African societies have ensured cultural continuity. Africa's written literature could easily span close to five thousand years. Thinkers in the Afro-centric tradition trace the antecedents of African written literature to such touchstones as the scribal tradition of ancient Egypt, the Arabic poetic tradition, which began roughly with the Arab conquest of Egypt in the seventh century C.E., the spread of that tradition to the Maghreb and West Africa from the ninth century C.E., which culminated in the development of Hausa Islamic/Arabic verse from the seventeenth century on.

The twentieth century witnessed the blossoming of a generation of North African writers whose craft combined centuries of Arab narratological conventions and Western influences. These writers either write in Arabic or have influential translations of their works in English and French, or they write directly in the two European languages. Of those whose works attained international recognition in English are the Egyptians Naguib Mahfouz and Nawal El Saadawi. Mahfouz's deft handling of historical realism, his inimitable depiction of quotidian life in Cairo turned his fiction into an important opus of Arab imagination and earned him the Nobel Prize for literature in 1988, while Saadawi's

transgressive novels have become some of the most important feminist works in the twentieth century.

The modern novel in French came much later in the Maghreb. The Algerian, Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma* (1956), is usually considered the first significant work of the fiction from the Francophone Maghreb, even though the Moroccan, Driss Chraïbi had published a novel, *Le passé simple*, two years earlier. North African fiction in French soon blossomed with internationally acclaimed writers such as Tahar Ben Jelloun, Abdelhak Serhane, Abdelkébir Khatibi, and Assia Djebar. Djebar's expansive fictional opus, which explores wide-ranging themes such as the trauma of French colonization of Algeria, the brutal war of liberation, and the condition of women in the context of religion and tradition, has become the quintessence of North African literature in French.

European language literature, usually referred to as modern African literature, is the dominant African literature. Although the violence of colonialism and the attendant socio-political ruptures it occasioned in Africa constitute the background of modern African literature, texts have evolved over several decades and across numerous genres in a manner that allows for the identification of divergent thematic and ideological clusters, all of which underscore modern African literature's investment in the representation of the African experience.

The African novel developed within the ambit of historical revaluation, cultural nationalism, political contestation, and anti colonial protest. Although modern African fiction started with the publication of the Ghanaian Joseph Casely-Hayford's (1866) *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911), it was not until Amos Tutuola's (1920) *The Palm Wine Drunkard* appeared in 1952 that Anglophone West African fiction attained international

recognition. Francophone Africa's first novel, René Maran's (1960) *Batouala*, was published to considerable acclaim in 1921 and went on to win the prestigious prix Goncourt. *Batouala* owed its fame to Maran's vivid portrayal of the effects of French colonial rule in Africa as well as his evocative and humanizing descriptions of African life and its environment.

The novel came of age in Francophone Africa from the 1950s onward when writers such as Camara Laye (1928), Seydou Badian (1928), Mongo Beti (1932), Ferdinand Oyono (1929), Sembene Ousmane (1923), Cheikh Hamidou Kane (1928), Ahmadou Kourouma (1927), Williams Sassine (1944), Sony Labou Tansi (1947), Henri Lopès (1937), Alioum Fantouré (1938), and Tierno Monenembo (1947) arrived on the scene. The thematic spectrum of these writers is broad and their range reveals the shifts that occurred in the socio-political dynamics of their informing contexts, particularly the tragedy of one-party states and military dictatorships that became the rule in postcolonial Francophone Africa. For instance, Laye's *L'enfant noir* (1953) is a powerful bildungsroman that explores the growing up of an African child who loses the values of his traditional society in a world permeated by European values. In *Le pauvre Christ de Bomba* and *Une vie de boy* both published in 1956, Beti and Oyono, respectively, deploy critical satire to expose the hypocrisies of the colonial situation. Ousmane brings class analysis to the crisis of colonialism in *Les bouts de bois de dieu* (1960).

However, it was Chinua Achebe's (1930) *Things Fall Apart* (1958) that placed African fiction in the ranks of twentieth-century greats. In *Things Fall Apart*, the epic dimension of Africa's contact with the West, a preoccupation of much of modern African literature, reaches its philosophical and aesthetic peak. Much of Anglophone West

African fiction explores versions of Achebe's themes either as collective sociopolitical fissures in a changing world or as individual dramas of alienation. Cyprian Ekwensi (1921), T. M. Aluko (1918), Elechi Amadi (1934), Onuora Nzekwu (1928), John Munonye (1929), Wole Soyinka, Kofi Awoonor, Ayi Kwei Armah (1939), Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1938), Kole Omotoso (1943), and Festus Iyayi (1947) all became major Anglophone West African novelists in the period from the 1960s through the 1980s.

African women who constitute nearly half of their continent's population are paradoxically not treated on par with men in sphere of human activity. Despite the fact that they slave for the development of their husbands and children they are oppressed, suppressed and marginalized in matters of sharing the available opportunities for the fulfillment of their lives. Women in African societies subjected to gender bias. Lack of educational opportunities, unhappy marital lives, barrenness, polygamy are the major issues that weigh them down socially, economically, psychologically and physically. The male writers failed to present a realistic picture of the African women in their writings.

The unrealistic portrayal of the image of the African women has been corrected only after the emergence of women writers. As more and more African women got educated and they became to enter social and political spheres, the women writers became recording and interpreting the changes they have been undergoing in their contemporary societies. As they have been suffering in their patriarchal societies, they could experience the pains of these women who have been living in bondage to men since times unknown. Thus the picture of the cheerful and contented female complacency, presented by the male writers came to be replaced by a picture of the

exploited woman who could evaluate her positions in a patriarchal society and desire to live freely and fully.

With the rise of the Black women writers, there has been a drastic change in the African literary scenario. They wrote about the issues that deal with the traditional African women education, marriage, motherhood, emotional and economic independence, political and economic marginalization of the women, domestic violence and the women's resistance to oppression. These also form the major themes of their works. Their writings mirror their concern about the status of women and their commitment to free women from all modes of oppression.

African women writers only began to be accorded a space in the African literary cannon from 1966, with the publication of Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*. Therefore, representation of female characters in pioneering African novels like *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952), *Things Fall Apart* (1959), *Jagua Nana* (1961), *The Concubine* (1966), and *The River Between* (1965) were very constricted by portraying women mainly in submissive roles as wives and mothers. The positioning of women in traditional, domestic roles was possibly exacerbated by the absence of female as main protagonists in early African novels and effect was to marginalize women as accessories to the masculine story.

The emergence of the African woman writer was important in re- representing and re-visioning women's journey towards autonomy and self-determination and their writing heralded a radical change in the perception of gender in African literature. Their representation as Lloyd Brown in *Women Writers in Black Africa* (1981) emphasize that, "the experience, identity and role of a woman are all distinguishable from an [African]

man's" (211). Writers like Flora Nwapa (1966), Ama Ata Aidoo (1965), Bissie Head (1968) and Buchi Emecheta (1972) not only revisited existing depiction of the African woman by male writers but also represented female characters as experiencing their strengths and weaknesses in more realistic and vivid ways. These writers celebrated the image of African woman by using as prof. Ebele Eko in *Changes in the Image of the African Women* (1986) says "women as protagonists . . . women-related themes in their works . . . [showing] concern for the psychological growth and liberation of women from all forces of oppression and limitation" (218). Novels like *Efuru* (1966), *A Woman Alone* (1990), *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) and *So Long a Letter* (1981) are the examples of narratives that paved new ways of looking at African women in African literature. By incorporating elements of oral tradition and myths into their writing, these writers created a space for women characters to be dynamic and complex, allowing them to express themselves freely celebrating a sense of agency.

However, besides their active involvement in the African literary sphere, African women writers were not afforded the level of critical attention enjoyed by their male counterparts. For example, Bernth Lindfors' article, "The Famous Authors Reputation Test" reports the findings of a test created to evaluate African writers, the ranking of a particular author based on the number of occasions the author's text was reviewed, analyzed in a literary criticism article or made reference to in a bibliography. According to the results, from 1936 to 1986, all writers were male. The African women writers in Lindfors' test only gained recognition in 1986. Writers like Buchi Emecheta, Bissie Head, Ama Ata Aidoo, Flora Nwapa, Grace Ogot and Efua Sutherland found themselves among the lower half of the 37 writers in Lindfors' authors reputation test. It indicates

that African women writers were not present before 1960's and began to be given critical attention in the latter half of the 1980's.

Flora Nwapa included novels like *Efuru* (1966), *Idu* (1970), *Never Again* (1976) and *One is Enough* (1981) which identified Nigerian women in more authentic ways, representing them as more dynamic and complex characters than they appeared in the works of male writers. Consequently, the second generation women writers like Buchi Emecheta, Zaynab Alkali, Simi Bedford, Ifeoma Okoye and Theodora Akachi Ezeigbo, in novels such as *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979), *Destination Biafra* (1981), *The Stillborn* (1984), *The Virtuous Woman* (1987), *The Yoruba Dancing Girl* (1992) and *Behind the Clouds* (1982) continued to address the Nigerian women's general condition in the modern world, continuing on from their predecessors to validate women's role in Nigeria. Third generation women writers like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Sefi Atta, and Sade Adeniran, Unoma Azuah, Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, Sara Ladipo Manyika and Abidemi Sanusi are some examples of women who not only continue to portray present day Nigeria through their fiction but also re-convince more propitious images of Nigerian women.

Nigerian women writers suffered the lack of scholarly attention and were not accorded attention their Nigerian male counterparts received. Henrietta Otokunefor and Obiageli Wood in *Nigerian Female Writers: A Critical Perspective* (1989), writes that there was only few readily available criticism on Nigerian women writers, namely Lloyd Brown's *Women Writers in Black Africa* (1981). This suggests the importance of bringing together Nigerian women novelists, dramatists and poets in order to throw some

light on a number of relatively unknown female writers who have contributed immensely in their various areas to the development of Nigerian literature.

Buchi Emecheta, in full Florence Onyebuchi Emecheta was born on July 21, 1944 in Yaba near Lagos, Nigeria, to Igbo parents, Jeremy Nwabundinke and Alice Okuekwuhe Emecheta. Her parents were from Umuezeokolo Odeanta village in Ibusa, Delta State. Due to the gender bias in her community, Emecheta was kept at home as a child while her younger brother went to school. Although not having gone to school immediately like her brother, Emecheta's childhood was filled with the stories of her people and culture, told to her by her grandmother. These stories instilled in Emecheta a desire to write her own stories as well as the ones her grandmother told. Thus Emecheta quickly became interested in going to school, and after finally persuading her parents to consider the benefits of her education, Emecheta was allowed to go to school. After her father's death, Emecheta's mother could no longer support her, and the family was separated. Emecheta was sent to live with her mother's cousin in Lagos while her younger brother went to live with her father's brother. Emecheta hoped to go on to the University of Ibadan, but that dream was thwarted when she was married off to Sylvester Onwordi to whom she had been betrothed at the age of 11. Her husband then went to study at London University. Emecheta stayed in Lagos and worked at the American Embassy for two years to support her children while her husband was away. In 1962, she and her children moved to London to join her husband.

While in London, she worked as a librarian at the British Museum. Surrounded by books and having had the dream of becoming a writer since childhood, Emecheta began to write in her spare time. However, her husband was suspicious of her writing. When she

finally completed her first manuscript, he burned it. After already having a marriage filled with moments of unhappiness and even occasional violence, Emecheta's husband's destruction of her manuscript finally led to their separation. After separating, Emecheta continued to work at the library to support her children. In the meantime, she attended classes at the University of London, eventually earning an honors degree in sociology in 1974. Despite the emotional strains, social pressures, and financial difficulties of being an African woman and a single parent in Great Britain, she graduated with her BA Honors. Emecheta speaks openly about the hardships she faced in her autobiography *Head Above Water*, stating, "As for my survival for the past twenty years in England, from when I was a little over twenty, dragging four cold and dripping babies with me and pregnant with a fifth one – that is a miracle" (5).

Once her novels began attracting global attention, she began lecturing in U.S. universities such as Pennsylvania State University, Rutgers University, Yale University, University of California, Los Angeles and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. From 1980 to 1981, she was senior resident fellow and visiting professor of English at the University of Calabar in Nigeria. From 1982 to 1983 she and her son, Sylvester, started and ran their own publishing company, Ogwugwu Afor, publishing her own work under the company's name, the first being a novel titled *Double Yoke* (1982). Tragically in 2010, Emecheta suffered a stroke. She passed away at her home in London on January 25, 2017. Emecheta's life experiences reflected in her writings are a platform for voicing her desire to achieve human rights for African women.

Emecheta's writings have shown her as an author who portrays herself through several identities that coincide with one another. Some of the lenses she presents include

single African woman, sociologist pulling from urban African ways of life, narrator of African myths that clash with modern society, and the remembrance of enslaved Africans. These lenses suggest that Emecheta's novels remain grounded in stories from her personal life as well as cultural facts. Her work accurately reflects Igbo society's attitudes about the necessity of motherhood as well as the double standards for men and women. Emecheta's most important lens that most people never see, is her identity as a feminist. She doesn't consider herself a feminist but just as a woman who works for the liberation of women. She considers herself simply a story teller. Her purpose for writing is to inform her audiences about African lifestyle, and the gender discrimination that not only she faced, but that all African women faced and still face to this day in African society.

Throughout her life, Emecheta was subject to gender discrimination and female objectification. She was kept from attending school simply because she was a girl, betrothed as a child, and eventually married to a man who did not respect her – leaving her to find her strength and independence as a single mother and African woman overseas in an unwelcoming society. In most African cultures, women are viewed as the property of their husbands. They do not have a say. Having experienced this herself, Emecheta took it upon herself to speak against it. Despite the obstacles, writing provided a way for her to rise above these gender injustices and expose the truth of the world she was living in. Emecheta's writing was not only a way for her to send a message to society but also was a way for her to fulfill her childhood dream of becoming an author.

Emecheta highlights retrogressive Igbo cultural norms that prevented women from participation in a wide range of activities said to be the preserve of men. She speaks

out against the subjugation of Igbo women in the quest for social change. She talks about her personal experiences ever since she was a little girl. Emecheta published 16 adult novels as well as four children's books, numerous articles, and produced televised plays. Each of her novels is based on her life experiences.

Emecheta's first novel, *In the Ditch*, published in 1972, is semi-autobiographical. It first appeared as a series of episodes, published in *The New Statesman*. This novel follows Emecheta's own descent into the "ditch" of welfare living and enforced dysfunctionality. It chronicles Adah's (the protagonist's) struggle to maintain her pride and dignity as a welfare recipient as well as her keen desire for independence for herself and her children. Her second novel, *Second Class Citizen*, published 1974, is the sequel to *In the Ditch*. It showcases a fictionalized portrait of a poor young Nigerian woman struggling to bring up her children in London – thus it echoes the challenges Emecheta herself faced when raising her children. *The Bride Price* (1976), *The Slave Girl* (1977), *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) and *Double Yoke* (1982) are all emblematic of Emecheta's works built around the struggle against the shackles that oppressed women. Emecheta illuminates with passion and unsparing wit the ways that patriarchy works in rural Africa so as to undermine women's humanity. She exposes the child – bride's anguish, her forced or arranged marriage and the noxious levirate system that supports the inheritance of a wife by the male members of the same family on the death of her husband.

Emecheta's other novels include *Destination Biafra* (1982), *Naira Power* (1982), *The Rape of Shavi* (1983), *Gwendolen* (1989), *Kehinde* (1994) and *The New Tribe*, her final work, was published in 2000. *Destination Biafra* is set in the background of Civil

War in Nigeria while *The Rape of Shavi* is the account of European colonization of African countries. Gwendolen is the story of a young West Indian girl who lives in London. *Kehinde* depicts the story of a Nigerian wife and mother who comes back to Nigeria after living in London for many years. In the novel *The New Tribe*, Emecheta highlights the importance of cultural identity and difference, cultural assimilation, responsibility and proper parenting.

The main source of inspiration for her writing, however, was Africa, and in particular the villages of Ibuza in eastern Nigeria where her family came from. Even though she had spent a relatively brief period of her childhood there, the villages and the stories she heard on her visits with her mother left an indelible mark on the impressionable young girl and became the lodestone for all she wrote. In *The Slave Girl*, *The Bride Price* and the ironically titled *Joys of Motherhood*, she poignantly captures, in a manner reminiscent of her male contemporary Chinua Achebe, a vanishing Igbo culture in the process of transition to modernity.

Emecheta's children's novels include *Nowhere to Play*, published in 1980; *The Moonlight Bride*, published in 1980; *Titch the Cat*, published in 1979; *The Wrestling Match*, published in 1981. She also wrote plays which include *Juju Landlord* (1975), *A Kind of Marriage* (1976), and *Family Bargain* (1987). *Juju Landlord* and *A Kind of Marriage*, performed at the London theatre also shine a light on the inequalities African women face in their day-to-day lives. *Head Above Water*, autobiography, published in 1984, describes the social conditions of Blacks in late twentieth century London and it shows Emecheta's progression as a novelist. The novel ends with two monumental accomplishments, the purchase of her own house and of becoming a full-time writer.

Emecheta also authored several influential articles such as: *The Black Scholar*, “*Feminism with a small ‘f’!*” in Kristen H. Petersen (ed.), *Criticism and Ideology: Second African Writers Conference Stockholm* (1988), *Essence Magazine* (1990), *The New York Times Book Review* (1990), *Publishers Weekly* (1990), *World Literature Today* (1994).

Emecheta translated her real life experiences into narrative novels to use these stories as a platform to expose the hardships African women face in their everyday lives, as well as advocate for the rights of African women in Igbo, Nigeria, and ultimately all of Africa. In each of her writings, Emecheta laments as well as protests the oppression, powerlessness, and voiceless aspects of life that manifest and dictate the lives of women. The concern for the self- characterization of black women makes Emecheta prefer the term “womanist” to “feminist” to describe her in fiction.

The novel *The Joys of Motherhood* chronicles the life of an Igbo woman, Nnu Ego, from her childhood life in the village of Ibuza in western Igboland and her married life in Lagos to her lonely death back in Ibuza. Nnu Ego, the daughter of village chief, Agbadi and Ona, is married to Amatokwu, son of wealthy family. But soon her marriage turns to be a failure when she is unable to bear a child. Her husband takes a second wife and she soon becomes conceived. When Amatokwu finds Nnu Ego breast feeding his second wife’s child, he beats her. Nnu Ego goes back to live with her father and he arranges second marriage for her. Nnu ego secondly marries a man called Nnaife who works as a washer man in Lagos. Though Nnaife is not her ideal man she soon becomes pregnant. When her son dies soon after he was born, the devastated Nnu Ego decides to commit suicide by throwing her off from the bridge. But a villager saves her from being

committing suicide and manages to send her back home. Nnaife loses his job and the two struggles to survive.

Nnu Ego then gives birth to male child called Oshia. Nnaife gets a job in the ship and returns from the ship after long months. Nnaife's brother dies so his youngest wife Adaku moves to Lagos with her children to Nnu Ego's house. Nnaife joins the army and he is sent to fight in the World War II. He does not return for four years. Adaku takes up the trading to support herself and her two children and Nnu Ego tries to support her four children. The two women have a conflict but soon Adaku realizes her position as junior wife and having only daughters not sons she leaves to become a prostitute. Nnu Ego has a difficult time supporting the children along with the children that Nnaife keeps fathering. Nnu Ego expected that her son Oshia would get a good job and would help his brother and sister. But Oshia had plans for himself he leaves to America by causing great grief for his family. Kehinde, Nnu Ego's third child also runs away with a Yoruba man. Nnaife tries to assault the Yoruba man's father and sent to prison. Adim, her second son immigrates to Canada. Nnu Ego at the end of the novel returns to her father's home alone and dies a lonely death by having nobody by her side. Nnu Ego's children come to Ibuza to hold an elaborate funeral for their mother and also set up a shrine for her so that any women who want children can pray to her. But Nnu Ego never answered the prayers.

This project is on Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, her magnum opus, in which she breaks away from the common portraiture in African writing that narrates a dominantly patriarchal way of life and instead focuses on a matriarchal approach to African life where motherhood is depicted as honorific and central to African societies, communities, and families. According to the protagonist, Nnu Ego, "the joy of being a

mother is the joy of giving all to you children” (219). Even though the main theme for this novel is motherhood which ultimately leads to and brings ambiguous joy, Emecheta paves a far different path for her protagonist, Nnu Ego. She shows the two sides to what it takes to be an African mother. Rather than being self-fulfilling and life-giving, Emecheta shows that motherhood and the responsibilities it creates in African communities can turn into a form of enslavement. For Nnu Ego, her life, hope, and identity depend on her ability to bear children. In the eyes of the community, she has no other primary function and no other means of achieving status and respect other than through this motherhood. As an Igbo mother, Nnu Ego is expected to arm her sons for the future at the expense of her daughters. Emecheta shows her readers that Igbo society views girls as having little worth, valuable only for the bride price they will one day fetch when their marriage is arranged. Nnu Ego anticipates and longs for the day when women in her culture will be of prime importance, rather than simply being vehicles that serve and aid men and children at women’s expense. She hopes that women can achieve a life of satisfaction and self-fulfillment. In this novel, Emecheta believes that women deserve to be liberated from the traditional shackles of having to be mothers who are forced and expected to raise their children a certain way according to specific cultural standards, and have to be servants to their husbands.

This project focuses on the three important aspects of the novel *The Joys of Motherhood* such as motherhood, dominance of patriarchy and culture in African society which subjugates the life of the protagonist and other women characters in the novel. The second chapter deals with the crisis an African woman faces in order to prove her validity through motherhood.

CHAPTER TWO

CRISIS OF MOTHERHOOD

The term 'Motherhood' has always been a complicated yet sacred thing. In the words of many writers, it has got many definitions and assumptions. But it has remained pure as always. Motherhood is not something that can be explained in words. It is something that a woman experiences and takes it to be the most sacred level. 'Motherhood' is at first biological, which connects to every emotion of women and then it goes way beyond its meaning to the extent of social structure, practice, imposition etc. It has still been practiced rather with traditional, cultural, and religious values than with modern values. For some, motherhood completes a woman, for some it is a way for woman to escape from being barren and for some it is the heritage provider.

Motherhood is the central concern of feminist and woman's movement from the very beginning. Motherhood is understood as an important act which goes way beyond the physical act of giving birth irrespective of class, creed, culture and religion. Therefore, it is regarded as a sacred and powerful act for being able to bring new lives to the world. Though motherhood is regarded as sacred, a woman loses her individuality in its sacredness. After the childbirth the woman loses her 'self' or sacrifices her 'self' and gets totally absorbed in the care of the child.

The concept of motherhood in African context is very much influenced by the religious mythologies and folklores. Motherhood is regarded as a colourful experience of sacrifice, and mothers are seen as the creator, protector, saviour, nurturer provider and goddess etc. In short, the African concept of motherhood is 'sacrificing the self'. In the

African context, motherhood is aspired by every woman. It is believed that motherhood is the only thing that can complete a woman and it is the role given by god to be fulfilled by woman. But the same thing does not happen in the West. Motherhood is not imposed upon them and it is not seen as a requirement to complete a woman. The western woman has all liberty to make choice of hers and doesn't see motherhood as a quality for womanhood. However, many African novelists are of view that every woman was encouraged from their childhood to marry and to bear children in order to express their womanhood in the complete sense. Many writers also regard that the basis of marriage among Africans implied the transfer of a woman's fertility to the husband's family group. Motherhood has become a critical matter in some societies that it has brought misfortune for its women who are childless. A woman without a child is seen as barren and incomplete in such societies. The French writer Simon de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* says that since her infancy a woman is told or made to believe they are made for child- bearing. A woman is often told about the 'splendours of maternity' that motherhood is a marvellous privilege availed by woman only. While praising motherhood so much she also points out the burdens of motherhood like menstruation, pregnancy, delivery and boredom of household works.

Many feminists have raised their voice against the overemphasis on fertility. They also pointed out women who being involved in productive role have been restricted from the public life for their role of being a child-bearer and child-nurturer. They argued that the motherhood has been seen from patriarchal perspective throughout human history so it has been objectified by male power and the voice of women has been crushed. They

made an appeal to put an end to the assumptions, gaze or practice of motherhood that controls both the body and energy of women.

Naomi Nkealah in *Conceptualizing Feminism(s) in Africa*, says, African feminism “strives to create a new, liberal, productive and self –reliant African woman within the heterogeneous cultures of Africa. Feminism in Africa, ultimately aim at

modifying culture as it affects women in different societies.” (133). With such a concept Buchi Emecheta has created her famous novel *The Joys of Motherhood* which deals with the quest for new woman who is independent, self-reliant and powerful and has a voice.

A woman from her childhood is taught that once they enter womanhood they should get married and bear children. The woman’s psychology however accepts the need to become a mother to please her father’s family and husband and specially to please the society. So she gets completely involved in living her motherhood which is said to bring meaning to her life and exerts her individuality. But things do not work in that way for the protagonist Nnu Ego. It becomes burden for her. The joy of motherhood fades away soon for her. She gets entrapped in motherhood and it makes her to work like a slave to feed it.

Emecheta’s *The Joys of Motherhood* is one of the complex Bildungsroman novels written in colonial Nigeria across the early to mid-twentieth century. It revolves around the concept of motherhood and womanhood. From the female point of view Emecheta points out her view against all the exploitations and negativity that are done to women in the name of traditional values. Emecheta expresses her strong opposition against the unfair, unjust and oppressive system of the whole society which is prevailing

in the traditional Nigerian setting. The novel describes the protagonist Nnu Ego's transformation from the strong tradition bound character to a feminist. Nnu Ego's efforts for proving her validity through motherhood is saddened at every turn. Unfortunately, subverted by complex set of contradictions she finds herself incapable of the bargain. The novel is dedicated to all the mothers which begins with the first chapter titled *The Mother* and ends with the chapter titled *The Canonized Mother*.

The novel is set in colonial Nigeria during 1930's and 1940's. It deals not only with motherhood but also the effect of colonialism which affected the position of woman in the traditional African society. The traditional set up of motherhood fails to work in the colonial setting. The expectation and demands of the husband in both the settings remains the same only women's identity gets affected in both. The privilege enjoyed by the women in the traditional setting was lost in the colonial society. Therefore the protagonist Nnu Ego suffers when she comes to Lagos to live with her second husband Nnaife. The pleasures associated with motherhood that Nnu Ego so eagerly anticipates are completely negated by the difficult economic conditions of her new urban environment. There are only few job opportunities for husband Nnaife to pursue.

Nnu Ego spends her entire life in giving birth to a child and working throughout the day as cigarette peddler to stave off the hunger and poverty that invariably haunts her household. In the traditional society, children were regarded as blessings but in the colonial society, the children became the burden as the parents did not have enough money to feed them. Thus the pride and the joy of being a mother becomes' sour. The children, with the change of society become money minded and self-oriented and they do not even get time to take care of their parents. The same thing happens to Nnu Ego, her

sons leave Nigeria and her daughters get married and move away. Nnu Ego dies at the road side alone and unnoticed.

The novel's title *The Joys of Motherhood* is borrowed from the closing sentence of Flora Nwapa's famous novel *Efuru*. The closing sentence elevates a paradox about the much consulted childless river goddess Uhamiri: "She has never experienced the joy of motherhood. Why then did women worship her" (221). As the title suggests *The Joys of Motherhood* did not actually paint the colours of the joys of motherhood. Rather it is an ironical concept on the joys of motherhood. There are only a few joys associated with the motherhood the real suffering of Nnu Ego is seen through her monologue, she says,

God when will you create a woman who will be fulfilled in herself, a full human being, not anybody's appendage? I was born alone, and I shall die alone. What I have gained from all this? Yes, I have many children, but what do I have to feed them on? On my life, I have to work myself to the bone to look after them. I have to give them my all. And if I am lucky enough to die in peace, I even have to give them my soul. They will worship my dead spirit to provide them: it will be hailed as a good spirit so long as there are plenty of yams and children in the family, but if anything should go wrong, if a young wife does not conceive or there is a famine, my dead spirit will be blamed. When will I be free? (209).

The theme of motherhood in the novel is portrayed through the protagonist Nnu Ego and her mother Ona. The novel opens as Nnu Ego runs away from her home in Lagos when she finds her first baby dead which was born only few weeks back. While running Nnu Ego feels the pain in her breast which was filled with milk, Emecheta says,

Her baby . . . her baby! Nnu Ego arms involuntarily went to hold her aching breast, more for assurance of her motherhood than to ease weight . . . but unlike the milk, this pain could not come out, though it urged her on, and she was running away from it yet it was inside her. There was only way to rid herself of it. For now how she would be able to face the world after what had happened . . . It was best to end it all this in way, only good way (2).

Nnu Ego decides to commit suicide by heading to Carter Bridge intent on throwing herself off. As she walks towards the bridge Nnu told herself, “It would be soon over, right there under the deep water that ran below the Carter Bridge. Then she would be able to seek out meet her *chi* personal god and she would ask why she had punished her” (3). *Chi*, Nnu Ego’s personal god, is a slave woman who forced to die with her mistress and brings disasters throughout Nnu Ego’s life. The action of the novel then shifts to twenty –five years previous to this moment to the village of Ibuza.

Agbadi the village chief is enamoured by the beautiful and strong willed Ona. The name Ona means ‘a priceless jewel’, which given by her father chief Obi Umunna. He had no son so he decided to get male child through Ona. Obi Umunna gave her the liberty to select the man for her but if she bore a son then she should give the child to him “thereby rectifying the omission nature had made” (7). Ona was allowed to visit Agbadi and nurses him when he was hit by an elephant during the hunting trip. Ona becomes pregnant with Agbadi’s child. According to her father’s wish she refuses to marry Agbadi and made an agreement with him that if she gives birth to a male child it would be given to her father and if it is a female child it would belong to Agbadi. Here the role of

motherhood begins for Ona without marriage. She delivered a daughter and Agbadi won the agreement. The painful joy of Ona, being a complete woman had come “Her baby daughter was very merciful to her”. “Ona was dazed with happiness. Agbadi had won, she thought to herself, at the same time feeling pity for her poor father” (23). The motherhood of Ona gave joy to Agbadi but sadness to her father. The girl was named Nnu Ego as Agbadi says, “This child is priceless, more than twenty bags of cowries. I think that should really be her name, because she is a beauty and she is mine. “Yes, “Nnu Ego”: twenty bags of cowries” (23). Ona lived with her daughter in her father’s place. When Nnu Ego was affected by the lump on her head, Agbadi forced her to stay with him.

The joyful life of Ona and her freedom was affected because of her role as a mother. She was forced to give importance to her child than her father and moves with Agbadi. There the motherhood instead of giving joy brought her sadness. Then Ona became pregnant once again and she becomes sick. She delivers a premature son but both she and her son dies. The delivery brings the fatal end to the mother. Ona’s father expecting son from her was disappointed and loses his priceless jewel. Before her death she asks Agbadi to allow Nnu Ego to live the life of her own as she says, “see that however much you love your daughter Nnu Ego you allow her to have a life of her own , a husband if she wants one. Allow her to be a woman” (26).

Nnu Ego was given the full freedom by Agbadi as her mother wished. She had a happy life as a daughter. But her happiness was interrupted by her marriage with Amatokwu. After her marriage people around her expected a child soon from her. From there began trouble for her “Nnu Ego was surprised that as months passed, she was

failing everybody. There was no child. ‘What am I going to do Amatokwu?’ she cried to her husband, after the disappointment of another month” (29). When she failed in becoming a mother, she lost all the care and compassion from her husband. Amatokwu marries another woman. His second wife soon became pregnant and delivered a son. It makes Nnu Ego a less important person in Amatokwu’s family and she prays to her *chi*, “O my *chi*, why do you have to bring me so low? Why must I be so punished?” (30). She cried in frustration and hopelessness. The longing for motherhood raised high in her and she became foster mother to the child. She started to breast feed the child due to her earnestness for motherhood “Nnu Ego locked her hut, lay aside the child and gave him her virgin breasts. She closed her eyes as contentment ran through her whole body. The baby’s restlessness abated and he sucked hungrily, though there was no milk. For her part, she felt some of the fulfilment for which she yearned” (32). But her fulfilment does not last long; she was beaten by her husband when he finds her breast feeding his child. At that point her beloved father came and rescued her and took her back to his home to recover from the sufferings she has undergone both physically and mentally. Agbadi arranges the second marriage for his daughter. He chose Nnaife Owulum as her husband who works in a city of Lagos as a washer man under a white man Dr.Meers. He was ready to send his daughter far away to a city so that she could prove that she is not barren.

Nnu Ego reaches Lagos with Nnaife’s brother. When she saw Nnaife she doesn’t like him because of his appearance “she felt like bursting into tears, like begging the senior Owulum to please take her home” (43). But she wanted to satisfy her father and to her desire to become a mother, “Another thought ran through her mind: suppose this man made her pregnant, would that not be an untold joy to her people?” (45). She

accepted her marriage with Nnaife and became successful in delivering a boy. Owerri the cook's wife praised her, "I see you have given your husband a son. It's not common for people to have sons for the first baby. You are lucky" (55). Nnu Ego felt happy and considered herself as a fulfilled woman, she says "He has made me into a real woman – all I want to be, a woman and a mother. So why should I hate him now?" (55). The boy was named Ngozi but after few weeks the boy dies. The short lived happiness disappoints Nnu Ego a lot and leads her to commit suicide, "I am not woman anymore! I am not a mother any more. The child is there, dead on that mat. My chi has taken him away from me. I only want to go in there and meet her . . ." (65). But Nwakusor, a man who knows Nnu Ego, saves her. A woman consoled Nnu Ego by telling her the incident happened in her life and she said to Nnu Ego that "she has only just lost the child that told the world that she is not barren" (65).

Nnu Ego's longing to gain the joy of motherhood was not calmed. She became pregnant again and delivered a boy. She named the boy as Oshia. This time she decided to take care of the child and decided to give up her trading business which she was doing since she arrived at Lagos. She said to herself "Nnu Ego the daughter of Agbadi, don't be greedy. Manage with Nnaife's income and look after your child" (88). She dreamt of putting Oshia in a good school and wished to give better future for her child. But things happened in a different way Nnaife's master returns to their country and he loses his job. But he soon gets a job in ship and leaves Lagos. Now Nnu ego has to take care of Oshia and her newly born second son Adim until Nnaife returns. Poverty strikes her family so hard. Her son Oshia becomes ill because of malnutrition. Nnu out of her motherly instincts "sold all her clothes at a fraction of their costs to Fulani street walkers, telling

herself that if her sons should live and grow, they would buy all the clothes she would ever need” (115). She loves her son so much and doesn’t want him to leave her. He is her joy, father and brother. Oshia recovers from his illness through his mother’s effort in taking care of him.

Nnaife returns from Ferdinand Po and Nnu Ego felt happy. Meanwhile, Nnaife’s brother died and the family responsibility befell on Nnaife. Now Nnaife has to inherit the wives of his brother. But Adaku alone with her only girl child visits Nnaife’s home which upsets Nnu Ego. She started hating her “Adaku turned out to be one of the shameless woman whom Nnu Ego did not like” (138). Nnaife started to work as a grass cutter for the rail road. Adaku and Nnu Ego become pregnant at the same time. Nnu Ego gives birth to twin girls and Adaku give birth to a son but the child soon dies after few days. The family faces the great financial struggle. The responsibility of the mother increased in Nnu Ego as she has to feed more mouths. The twins were named Taiwo and Kehinde. The mother is given respect only when she gives birth to a male child, Nnu Ego says, “Hm, I doubt if our husband will like them very much. One can hardly afford to have one girl in a town like this, to say nothing of two” (140). Nnaife in the meantime was forced to join the army to fight in the Second World War.

The mother role of Nnu Ego does not end in giving birth to a child, but also in giving protection to them. Oshia was affected by health problem and he was taken to the medicine man. He told her that the jealousy of Adaku brought him the sickness and ceremonies have to be performed to cure him. The life of Nnu Ego as a mother was filled with troubles and responsibilities with less happiness. With her husband in the unknown place, Nnu Ego carries her next child and she also has to look after her children’s

education. The money sent by Nnaife was shared by his wives and the sufferings of her being a mother for many children continued. Nnu Ego goes to her village Ibuza to see her dying father along with her children. Her father dies after seeing his daughter. Few weeks after his death Nnu Ego delivers a boy, who has the physical feature of her dead father Agbadi. The child was named Nnamdio. Adankwo, the senior wife of Nnaife's brother advises Nnu Ego to return to Lagos, "Have you ever heard of a complete woman without a husband? You have done your duty to your father, a man with such nobility of spirit it defied explanation. Now it is to your husband that you should go" (177).

Back in Lagos, Nnu Ego finds Adaku being successful in her trading business and becomes jealous of her success. The conflict occurs between the two men and the men supported Nnu Ego even though she is wrong, she is the senior wife. Adaku finally realises her position in the family as junior wife and decides to leave for the better future for her daughters, "Everybody accuses me of making the money all the time. What else is there for me to do? I will spend the money I have in my girls a good start in life" (188). She leaves Nnaife's home to become a prostitute for the sake of her children.

Nnu Ego once a barren woman now became the mother of five children with three boys and two girls. The longed motherhood gave her happiness yet the turmoil to fulfil their needs continued. Nnaife's absence increased her responsibility. She lost hope in her husband. She shifted her hope towards her children. She struggled a lot to bring them up with good education. Oshia her elder son was taken out from school when she was unable to pay the fees. "Oshia looked at the image of dejection and cried: But I love school Mother. All my friends are there. Why do I have to stop so many times?" (194). She was unable to answer his questions. The motherhood which once gave her joy slowly

started fading when she was unable to fulfil her children's wishes "Her love and duty for her children were like her chain of slavery" (209). Nnu Ego soon becomes happy and excited on the return of her husband Nnaife. She became hopeful that her problem would soon end after his arrival. But Nnaife started spending his time with friends by enjoying his life and drinking palm-wine with them. She again becomes pregnant and gave birth to two girl twins. They were named as Obiageli and Malchi. But Nnaife was not happy with the birth of the female children

Nnu Ego, the mother of seven children with one hope undergoes all the strains and sufferings that her children's good education will bring a peaceful and happy life during her last days. But her children proved that the mother only needs to be selfless and the children are always selfish. She had a great hope in Oshia that he would soon take the responsibility of the family and his brothers and sisters education. But Oshia had different plans for his future Oshia chooses Education over his parents which seen through his conversation with his brother Adim,

You are too young to understand Adim. I don't want to live like my parents. Education is a life-long project. If I stop now, I shall help them half the way. I intend to go further after leaving school. Say four to five years after that . . . then I shall be able to do something for them. Not now (215).

He said to his mother when she asked to help his brother he replied "After Hussey, I shall gone to a university . . . I can't even help myself" (216). Both Oshia and Adim were less bothered about their family. The mother was disappointed by her children again. Already her husband did not care about her much now the children begin to act in the same way.

Now around the age of forty Nnu Ego delivers her ninth child, which is a girl, but the child dies after few hours. “Then she started to feel guilty. Had she wanted the child to die – was that the interpretation of the slight relief she had experienced when she crawled the dead child to check what sex it is?” (219). The eagerness for motherhood had now turned to a kind of relief though the child is dead especially when she came to know that the child is a girl. Though she did not have any hatred toward a girl child, the society has made her to pity less for a girl child. Now the joy in motherhood has changed her.

Oshia gets a job in United States and leaves not even thinking about the mother who had worked throughout her life for the welfare of her children. “Mother I still want to go. They have given me scholarship. I don’t take the opportunity offered me now, it may never come again” (225). Nnaife who could not control his anger shouted, “I wish you had died instead of my first son Ngozi” (226). Adim feels sad “Nobody thinks at all about me. It’s only Oshia, Oshia every time” (226). Adim also leaves to Canada. The children expected their parents to care them but they were not ready to care for them in return. Not only sons but also the daughter brought sorrow to Nnu Ego. Kehinde, one of her twin daughter elopes with a Yoruba man, which is against their Ibo community to marry a Yoruba man. Her daughter’s elopement is blamed upon Nnu Ego who as a mother has not brought her child in a good manner. “If her mother had done her work well, why should the girl leave home to wander about Lagos at this time of the night?” (234). When Nnaife came to know of his daughter’s elopement he tried to kill the Yoruba man’s father and ends up in jail. He also blames Nnu Ego, “You see, you see, Nnu Ego

what you have done to me! One of your daughters is responsible for their taking me to jail” (237). Nnu Ego loses her joy in motherhood because of her children’s behaviour.

When Oshia does not come to help the family when Nnaife is in jail, Nnu Ego doesn’t even blame him instead prays for her son. According to her “a mother can never, never reject her son” (241). Nnu Ego decides to return to Ibuza after undergoing great sufferings in the city of Lagos. Taiwo asked her mother to leave Obiageli with her and she will take care of her. But Nnu Ego replied “Taking the children from me is like taking away the life I always known, the life I am used to” (251). She showered the love, care and affection for children as a true mother, though she did not received the same from them.

The death of Nnu Ego was very pathetic in the end of the novel. A mother of seven children dies on the road a lonely death like an orphan, “Nnu Ego lay down by the road side, thinking she has reached home. She died quietly there, with no child to hold her hand and no friend to talk to her. She had never really made many friends, so busy building up her joys as a mother. Poor Nnu Ego, even in death had no peace! Still, many agreed that she had given all to her children” (253).

Nnu Ego who dedicated her whole life for her children says, “I don’t know but anything else but a mother” (251). She was very happy in seeing her children being happy. She didn’t even have many friends to spend time because she always told herself that her big family is enough for her. She wondered,

Where she had gone wrong. She had had children, nine in all, and luckily seven where alive, much more than many women of that period could boast of. Most of her friends and colleagues had buried more children than

they were alive; but her god had been merciful to her". She however couldn't understand how her children who grew up with the values of her country, people and tribe has changed drastically and deserted her in the old age. She faces a lonely death "just like a barren woman" (247).

After her death all her children arrive and gave her a great funeral. Oshia and Adim made a shrine for their mother. In the eyes of the society it was a great act that Nnu Ego was lucky to have such children. People in society around her when she was alive and after her death thought she is a lucky woman, even the driver who takes her to the village Ibuza before her death says to her, "A son in America? Goodness, you must be full of joy, madam. But the reality is there is not even one of her seven children ready to take care of her in her old age. After struggling all her life pleasing and fulfilling her need for family and children, Nnu Ego was forced to understand that "the joy of being a mother was the joy of giving all to your children" (254). Later after her death women who could not conceive began to come to her shrine and pray for the children. But Nnu Ego never listened to those prayers and refused to fulfil them. By doing so she did not want another woman to become slave to the notion of motherhood throughout her life like her and wants them free from all familial and social ties imposed on them. The third chapter deals with the crisis of tyranny of patriarchy a woman faces in the African society.

CHAPTER THREE

CRISIS OF PATRIARCHAL HEGEMONY

Patriarchy is an authoritative male system that is both oppressive and discriminatory. It is oppressive in social, political, economic and cultural environments. It is discriminatory in its control of access to power, management of resources and benefits and manipulation of public and private power structures. Patriarchy as a concept has been defined and recreated by feminists in their quest to understand and analyze the origins and situation of the domination of women by men. Sylvia Walby in her work, *Theorizing Patriarchy* describes patriarchy as a social system in which men hold authority over women, children and property. It is a system in which women are subjected to economic dependence, violence, domestication and decision making. Therefore, in the patriarchal system, men are regarded as the authority within the areas of society like family, clan or tribe. Powers and possessions are passed on from father to son and decent in the male line.

Patriarchal systems and institutions are man-made which recognises male dominance and superiority over women. Kate Millett an American feminist, in *Sex Politics* argues that men are able to subordinate women through various institutions, such as academy, church and in the family, each of which justifies and reinforce women's weakness and subordination to men. The patriarchal construct is real and it is embedded in cultures. It imposes iniquitous power relations between men and women. In some

societies, culture and religion also imposes certain responsibilities on women which remains the prime obstacle for women's advancement and development.

The African socio-cultural setting is predominantly a patriarchal society where women are marginalized and suppressed within the family and in the society. Patriarchy aside, culture, tradition and religion also have an impact on the gender discrimination in the society. Women tolerate all kind of unfair treatments done by men. Standing up against this unfairness is seen as standing up against tradition culture and religion. By tolerating this unfairness African women becomes voiceless. The defining virtues of a standard African woman have unfortunately reduced them to subordination or total submission to her man and maintaining silence even in the face of clear subversion of their basic human rights and privileges. As quoted in Patricia Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* , “ Black women sexuality is often described in metaphors of speechlessness, space , or vision as a ‘ void’ or empty space that is simultaneously ever- visible (exposed) and invisible, where black women's bodies are already colonized” (123).

Like the African society which is patriarchal in nature, the literature of Africa is also labelled as patriarchal as the male characters overwhelm the female characters, who either play subservient role or portrayed as prostitutes, sex objects, indolent and pleasure seekers. C.O. Ogunyemi in *Perspective on Nigerian literature* describes Nigerian literature as “Phallic, dominated as it is by male writers and male critics who deals with male characters and male concerns, naturally aimed at a predominantly male audience” (42). The treatment of patriarchy in the African novel was first demonstrated in the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe's *Things Falls Apart* in which women play secondary but cheerfully accepted roles. Like Achebe, several other male African novelists

marginalised women or portrayed women negatively in their novels. Soon the African female novelists started responding by writing novels in which the female characters are used to depict the burden faced by women in the patriarchal society. Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* is one such novel in which the author exposes how patriarchy is ingrained in the African society.

Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* is one of the most successful and popular novels which focuses on socio-cultural and economic problems a Nigerian woman faces in the rural and urban settings. The novel explores the theme such as childlessness, polygamy, poverty and tyranny of patriarchy. The novel is the representation of ordeal of women and women related issues in the patriarchal society. The story captures the pathetic condition of a woman who in spite of her struggle and determination to survive in life faces a lonely death at the end of the novel. All her efforts, hopes and aspiration gain her nothing.

The protagonist of the novel Nnu Ego was born and brought up in traditional Ibo society, which like any other African society is largely and essentially patriarchal in nature. In such setting, men show superiority over their women counterparts who are usually pushed to the background. Therefore, socially, politically, economically women are to a larger extent, disadvantaged since decision were taken mostly by men. In the novel, Nnu Ego, in her native Ibuza village setting is humiliated every time and everywhere. First of all because her marriage was yet to yield a child and secondly for having many children she could hardly care for. Her first marriage ends up in childlessness and as a result her father rearranges another marriage for her in the

developing town of Lagos where much importance is laid on material things. The Nigerian critic Oladele Taiwo in her *An Introduction to West African Literature* says,

West African society attaches much importance to fertility in a woman, and, because it is patrilineal society, male issue is absolutely necessary if the line of succession is to continue and the name of the family be perpetuated. A woman who has no issue is considered to be in a state of permanent disgrace and is jeered at by all her neighbours (21).

In the novel, women characters Nnu Ego, Adaku and Agunwa in the name of traditions and customs become the victim of patriarchy. Polygamy is one of the tradition which subordinate women. The marriage of more than one wife is the norm in most patriarchal society. The theme of polygamy is exposed through the character chief Nwokocha Agbadi. He marries many women which is considered as a prestige for a chief. “Like most handsome men who are aware of their charismatic image, he had many women in his time. Whenever they raided a neighbouring village, Agbadi was sure to come back with the best- looking women” (5). These women are portrayed through the insatiable desire of Agbadi as commodities that can easily be dispensed when they are no longer useful. As Emecheta says, “He married a few women in the traditional sense, but as he watched each of them sink into domesticity and motherhood he was soon bored and would go further afield for some other exciting, tall and proud female. This predilection of his extended to his mistress as well” (5). Agbadi neglected his wives in favour of Ona, his new mistress. This act of negligence leads to the death of his senior wife Agunwa. She becomes very ill in the night when Agbadi had a sexual intercourse with Ona within

the earshot of all the members in the courtyard. The Ibuza people attributed Agunwa's death to the hearing of her husband giving pleasure to Ona,

Agbadi's senior wife, Agunwa, became ill that very night. Some said later that she sacrificed herself for her husband; but a few had noticed that it was bad for her morale to hear her husband giving pleasure to another woman in the same courtyard where she slept, and to a such woman who openly treated the man they all worshipped so badly (18).

Agunwa was unhappy by playing the role of a senior wife because she cannot complain about her husband who flaunts his sexual prowess before her in the courtyard with Ona.

She was forced to undergo the oppression in silence and dies. Marie Umeh in *Emerging Perspectives on Buchi Emecheta* comments that,

Agunwa's world falls apart, to say the least. It is shocking to realize that you have been duped. It's the knowledge that she has been weeping in silence, deprived for years, the reality that she has been exploited that brings on an illness which culminates in her death and places the curse on the family . . . (114).

Ona, the protagonist mother, though she has the freedom to choose the man of her own, she is culturally restricted to marry Nwokocha Agbadi the man she loves because,

Her father, despite having several wives, had few children, and in fact no living son at all, but Ona grew to fill her father's expectation. He had maintained that she must never marry; his daughter was never going to stoop any man. She was free to have men, however, and if she bore a son,

he would take her father's name, thereby rectifying the omission nature had made (7).

But chief Agbadi, made an agreement with Ona, his mistress that if she had a girl the child would belong to himself, but if it is a boy, the child would belong to her father. Agbadi wins the agreement as Ona gives birth to a girl, the child was named Nnu Ego. So Ona has to stay in her father's house till she gives birth to male child for her father's name to be immortalized.

Ona, like any other women yearns for her own husband but culture demands to stay in her father's house. She is torn between her father and her lover. She does not know what to do or which of two men to favour when Agbadi came to compromise Ona's father on the occasion of Nnu Ego's birth, as Agbadi says, "Did Ona tell of your compromise? She agreed that if she bore a baby girl, she would be mine, if a boy, he would be yours" for this Obi Umunna replies, "That may be true, my friend. I am not a man who can take seriously talks lovers on their love mat. She was your guest; you were a sick man then (24). In this conversation, the two men are only interested in the possession of the baby. The woman Ona is seen only as mere breeding machine by the two men and her emotions are ignored. While giving birth to the second child, she and her new born baby die. Before her death she asks Agbadi to allow Nnu Ego "have life of her own" (26).

Nnu Ego who was brought up by Agbadi is married to wealthy man Amatokwu with high bride price. Patriarchy demands an absolute chastity from women before marriage but men are free to lose their virginity at any time they desire. On the night when Nnu Ego becomes Amatokwu's wife everybody is anxious to know whether Nnu

Ego is still virgin or not. But nobody cares about Amatokwu, as a man he is free to do what he likes. Agbadi tells his friend Idayi, “There is nothing that makes a man prouder than to hear his daughter virtuous . . . When a woman is virtuous, it is easy for her to conceive” (29). A Woman is given respect only when she is able to bear sons otherwise she is considered as a barren woman. Nnu Ego’s marriage life gets affected when she failed in her pregnancy. When she asked Amatokwu why he did not love her like before he replied,

I am a busy man. I have no time to waste my precious male seed on a woman who is infertile. I have to raise the children for my line. If you really want to know, you do not appeal to me anymore. You are so dry and jumpy. When a man comes to a woman he wants to be cooled, not scratched by a nervy female who is all bones (31).

The above response of Amatokwu’s to Nnu Ego represents the pathetic condition of all African women. Amatokwu blames Nnu Ego that she is the one at fault over the childless marriage. When she fails to give Amatokwu a child, she moves to the inner hut which is for the senior wives and reduced to the position of a farm help, “At the farm Amatokwu kept ordering her about as he would any farm help . . . if you can’t produce sons, at least you can help harvest yams” (31). The new wife of Amatokwu gives birth a male child and he totally neglects his senior wife. When Nnu Ego was beaten by her husband for breast feeding his second wife’s child nobody blames Amatokwu for attacking her even Nnu Ego’s father says, “Amatokwu, I don’t blame you for beating her so badly” (34). Agbadi takes Nnu ego back to his home.

Agbadi felt that the marriage of Nnu Ego with Amatokwu should never have taken place. He says, "I don't think much of people who ill-treat a woman because she has not yet borne a child" (37). It is ironical because Agbadi was no different from many men. He himself might take many wives and then neglect them for years, apart from seeing that they each received their one Yam a day; he could bring mistress to sleep with him right in his courtyard while his wives pined and bit nails for a word from him. But when it comes to his own daughter, she must have a man who would cherish her. Agbadi arranges second marriage for Nnu Ego with Nnaife Owulum who lives in Lagos so that she can prove the world she is not barren.

Life in Lagos for Nnu Ego becomes prison to her. She is imprisoned by the culture that requires women should bring forth many children preferably males to be deemed successful in an African society. When Nnu Ego's first male child Ngozi dies few weeks after the birth, Nnu Ego decides to commit suicide by throwing herself in the river but she was saved by a man who belongs to her native village Ibuza. In the Patriarchal society, it is believed that a woman without children is not a fulfilled woman and she is also considered as a barren woman. Later in the novel Nnu Ego gives birth to many children which made her feel as a real woman. But after giving birth to nine children and sacrificed all for her children Nnu Ego in her old age realizes that,

The men make it look as if we must aspire for children or die. That's why when I lost my first son I wanted to die, because I failed to live up to the standard expected of me by the males in life, my father and my husband- and now I have to include my sons. But who made the law that we should not hope in our daughters? We women subscribe to that law more than

anyone. Until we change all this, it is still a man's world, which women will always help to build (210).

Nnu Ego is culturally oppressed in patriarchal society when she is forced to play the role of the 'Senior Wife'. Nnaife inherits Adaku as his wife after the death of his elder brother, which is the practice in Igbo culture. Nnu Ego was not happy about this inheritance but she cannot complain against this culture of man,

Nnu Ego knew that her father could not help her. He would say to her 'listen daughter, I have seven wives of my own. I married three of them, four I inherited on the death of the relatives. Your mother was only a mistress who refused to marry me. So why do you want to stand in your husband's way? Please don't disgrace the name of the family again (132).

She suffers in silence like the other senior wives in the society. Inwardly, she dies of envy and heart break,

Nnu Ego fought back tears as she prepared her own bed for Nnaife and Adaku. It was a good thing that she was determined to play the role of the matured senior wife, she was not going to give herself any headache when the time came for Adaku to sleep on that bed" (138).

Nnaife, like most polygamous men, feels great because he succeeds in humiliating Nnu Ego and sowing the seed of conflict between Nnu Ego and Adaku. This was later understood by Nnu Ego as she says "Men were so clever. By admonishing her and advising her to live up to her status as senior wife, they made it sound such an enviable position, worthy any woman's while to fight for" (187). Nnu Ego and Adaku undergo physical violence by Nnaife. First Nnaife attacks Nnu Ego with a guitar when she asks

him to find a job, “Nnaife lost his temper and banged the guitar he was holding against her head” (100). The women cannot raise their voice against their husband because the physical assault is considered as the part of their marital life.

All the women characters in the novel are presented as the second class citizens, as men prefers male child over the female child when Nnaife’s two wives Nnu Ego and Adaku become pregnant at the same time and Nnu Ego gives birth to a twin girl. Adaku was not sure how Nnaife will accept this because it is better to give birth to male child than to female in the Ibo society. Both women imagine their husband’s reaction in their conversation, “Hm, I know, but I doubt if our husband like them very much. One can hardly afford to have one girl in a town like this to say nothing of two” (140). When Nnaife returns home in the evening, he gets furious that Nnu has given birth to twin girls. He asks “Nnu Ego, what are these? Could you have not done better” (141). These word “what are these?” shows how patriarchal society seems to be partial towards women. Adaku after some days gives birth to a male child but soon the child dies. She laments that she prefers one of Nnu Ego’s twin set of child should have died. This shows how longing for the male child creates jealousy and unhealthy rivalry between women.

When a quarrel occurs between Nnu Ego and Adaku, all the elderly men supports Nnu ego though she had done mistake because she is the mother of the male child whereas Adaku has only daughters. Nwakuor supports Nnu Ego because she is the mother of four sons. He scolds Adaku,

I know you have children but they are girls, who in few years’ time will go and help build another man’s immortality. The only woman who is immortalizing your husband, you make her unhappy with your fine clothes

and lucrative business. If I were in your shoes, I would go home and consult my chi to find out why male offspring have denied men (185).

Nnu Ego herself believes that female children are inferior to male children and they have to work so as to fend for the male children. She says to her daughter, “But you are girls! They are boys. You are to put them in a good position in life, So that they will be able to look after the family. When your husbands are nasty to you, they will defend you” (197). Sex-role distinction can be seen in the novel as women are seen to perform house hold chores, taking care of babies and satisfying the man’s sexual desire. When Adaku asks Oshia, the male child and Dumbi, the female child to go and fetch water from the tap Oshia replies, “I am not going! I’m a boy, why should I help in the cooking? That’s the woman’s job (143). Nnu Ego believes that her husband is the lord who is superior to her and it is the duty of a wife to please her husband to become a best wife. She says, “Nnaife is the head of our family. He owns me, just like God in the sky owns us” (245).

Female children in the novel are considered as commodities and as source of income. Daughters are therefore seen as property of their fathers who can use as avenue for getting rich by getting bride price from their son in-laws. Nnu Ego does not send her daughters to school like her sons instead she makes her daughters to help her in the trading business. Nnaife arranges the marriage for his daughter Taiwo at the age of fifteen. He arranges the marriage when he came to know that her future husband is a clerk and that he can get more bride price from him,

He told himself that as long as the wife could bear children, keep his room clean and wash his clothes, he was perfectly satisfied. That Taiwo was

beautiful and quiet he calculated as an added bonus. Nnaife quickly approved of this man, knowing that his daughter was striking good bargain, and he was in a hurry to get as much money as possible from his children before retiring. Thank goodness, he had no older brother, so the whole bride price would come to him (229).

Nnaife gets furious when he came to know that his daughter Kehinde was in love with a butcher's son because he considers that the butcher's family are not rich enough to pay him high bride price he expects. This leads to a chaotic situation between Nnaife and the butcher and Nnaife is sentenced to five years imprisonment for threatening to kill the butcher. So the conception men have of the bride price turns women into some kind of goods possessed by men. Women are in some way becomes an investment from which men expects more profits through bride price.

The only women character in the novel who liberates herself from the male-dominated society is Adaku. Adaku liberates herself from her patriarchal marriage to become an independent woman. She is disappointed when she realises that her position as a second wife and the mother of daughters will not ensure her freedom. So she leaves to make her girls to get educated who are capable to work and earn money like men. She says to Nnu Ego, "I realise we women set impossible standards for ourselves. That we make life intolerable for one another. I cannot live up to your standards, senior wife. So I have to set my own" (189). Nnu ego who is contrast to Adaku followed all the tradition and customs in the patriarchal society without questioning it. But she asked herself "When will I be free" (210). She gets her desired freedom only after her death. The honour, respect and love that Nnu Ego longed for her entire life is given only after death

in the form of a great funeral. Her sons erect a shrine for her. Ironically, the society saw her sons as epitome of love for organizing great funeral for their mother but they never see the fact that they are responsible for Nnu Ego's death by leaving her alone in her old age to die a lonely death who sacrificed her youth and health in her life for them. Nnu Ego did not answer to any prayers of women who worshipped her for a child because she wants them not to struggle and suffer all her life pleasing men and fulfilling the needs of her children and dying a miserable death. Nnu Ego clearly understood that women were simply used by men and were never cared or respected or recognized.

Emecheta by using the women characters like Nnu Ego, Adaku and Agunwa exposes the challenges that African women face in the society. She tries to give a voice to the disfranchised silent African women, to give them a room of their own and to cast upon women's invisibility and oppression within the African patriarchy. As Yemi Mojola in *Research in African Literature* says,

Buchi Emecheta's works consistently reveal her commitment to the cause of women and her concern for their freedom from all practices and beliefs which impede their material and spiritual progress . . . Her works constitute a testimony of the indispensability of the woman in the social and economic life of Nigeria (36).

The fourth chapter deals with the cultural crisis of the protagonist when she is unable to adapt to the new environment in colonized Lagos and also the economic problem of an African woman in the urban settings.

CHAPTER FOUR

CRISIS OF CULTURE

Culture is defined as a way of life of a people, their norms, traditions, beliefs, language and food. The African society is one of the societies with rich customs and traditions. In the novel *The Joys of Motherhood*, Emecheta touches upon the crucial issue regarding the existence of the African woman in two different cultures. The novel is set in the time of British colonization of Nigeria in 1930's and 1940's. The protagonist of the novel Nnu Ego suffers in both the tribal environment in which she was born and in the urban environment in which she was forced to live the rest of her life. In the Ibo society, motherhood is the primary source of female self-esteem and public status. So Nnu Ego escapes from Ibo and flees to the distant city of Lagos when she fails to produce a child. In Lagos her dream of motherhood was fulfilled and she begets a lot of children but the pleasures associated with motherhood are denied by the difficult economic conditions of her new urban community and its norms and values. When her husband joins the British army and goes to fight in the war, she becomes the only breadwinner of the family by working as a street side peddler. She has to adapt to the new system which is devastating to maintain her role as a traditional wife and mother though the new system works against the success of the role and ends up with her subjugation.

With the arrival of colonialism, many changes take place in the Nigerian society and people found themselves in the dilemma either to assimilate this new life style and culture or cling to their traditional values. It results in the cultural clash between two

systems and created a great disorder in the already existing cultural, social, economic as well as the political system especially for women. Women who have already been subjugated by men in the traditional system again became the victim of the newly imported system which expects women to continue their traditional duties and responsibilities as Teresa Derrickson in her review on *Class, Culture and Colonial Contexts* says,

Nigeria's transition from a tribal culture to a tribal moral value system of a western capitalist system with all its benefits has occurred at the expense of women who have exchanged one form of patriarchy with another, while being stripped of former privileges and denied the right to new ones(5).

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Emecheta demonstrates how the traditional point of Woman's role in pre-colonial Nigeria was not applicable during the colonial period which brings problem for them. Emecheta uses her personal experience as a Nigerian woman whose life is distorted as a result of living between two cultures. As Nwachuku Esther Chikodili in her *Thematic Exploration of Buchi Emecheta's The Joys of Motherhood and Second Class Citizen* says, "Emecheta lives between two cultures. Her African culture makes her portray females as traditionally subordinate but, on the other hand, she is exposed to western values which influence how she portrays her female characters" (24).

The novel is set in the Ibuza village a rural environment which has its own traditions, customs, values and norms at the economic and social levels. According to the traditions of Ibuza, women are made to understand that they are brought up to obey and fulfil men's needs and desire. The women are seen as properties who can be bought and

sold. In the tribal Ibo society, a woman cannot make her own decision regarding her marriage and maternal life. Ona the mother of the protagonist Nnu Ego becomes the victim of the traditional society. Though Ona loves chief Agbadi, she was not allowed to marry to him, "Because her father had no son, she had been dedicated to the gods to produce children in his name, not that of any husband. She was torn between two men: she had to loyal to her father as well to her lover Agbadi" (14).

When she was forced to choose between her father and her lover she says to Agbadi, "My father wants sons and you have already many sons. But you don't have a girl yet. Since my father won't accept my bride price from you, if I have a son he will belong to my father but if a girl she will be yours. That is the best I can do for you" (22). Ona becomes pregnant with Agbadi's child and gives birth to a baby girl. After her father's death Ona moves to live with Agbadi. She dies while giving birth to her second child. In her death bed, she urges her husband to allow her daughter Nnu Ego to have life of her own. She says, "Please don't mourn for me too long; and see that however much you love our daughter Nnu Ego, you allow her to have a life of her own, a husband if she wants one. Allow her to be a woman" (26). As Ona knows that her culture does not allow a woman to lead an ordinary life like a man regarding their choice of the mates so she wants to defy the traditional and cultural values that govern her community. As Nicole Willey in *Ibuza vs. Lagos* says, "Emecheta's message is that Ona is to die because she is defying tradition by asking Agbadi to give their new born baby girl full freedom to choose a husband and to make her own decision in future" (158).

In the Igbo custom if a mistress dies her slave should also be buried with the owner. In the novel when Agbadi's senior wife Agunwa dies due to the illness. Her slave

girl was called by the medicine men to jump into her mistress grave. It is the tradition that a good slave was supposed to jump into the grave willingly, happy to accompany her mistress. But the slave girl did not wish to die as she kept begging for her life. Agbadi eldest son cried in anger,

So my mother does not even deserve a decent burial? Now we are not to send her slave down with her, just because the girl is beautiful? So saying, he gave the woman a sharp blow with the head of the cutlass he was carrying. ‘Go down like a good slave!’ he shouted (20).

When the slave girl was attacked she turned towards Agbadi and said, “Thank you for this kindness Nwokocha, the son of Agbadi. I shall come back to your household, but as a legitimate daughter. I shall come back . . .” (20). When Nnu Ego was born everyone in the village believed her to be that the slave girl was reborn who promised to come back as a legitimate daughter of Agbadi. So Dibia, the medicine man concludes that Nnu Ego’s *chi* or personal god would be the slave girl who would be responsible for both Nnu Ego’s happiness and catalogue of disasters.

Unlike her mother Ona who wants to defy the traditional values, Nnu Ego is imprisoned in the Ibo cultural traditions especially those associated with child bearing. According to the values in Ibo, as Mongo Beti in *perpetue et L’habitude du Malheur* says, “A child is a part of woman identity, the only symbol of hope, success and self-fulfilment for women. Fertility is the determinant factor for woman’s status and reputation” (6). A woman without a child is considered as a failed woman. The culture dictates that the role of a man is to give food and children to a woman and woman is to cook, bear children and look after them. Nnu Ego, the daughter of the chief was brought

up as a princess adhering to the value of Ibuza to be successful wife and mother. She gets married to a wealthy Ibo man Amatokwu. He rejects her when she fails to produce children because in Ibuza childless marriage is not recognized. He beats her and sends her back to her father Agbadi and he gets married to another wife, as in Ibuza there is the practice of polygamy. This tradition allows a man to marry another woman if his wife fails to be a mother and he can take the bride price back he has paid. As Salome Nnoromele in *Representing The African Woman* says, “Nnu Ego sacrifices her health and selfhood in the pursuit of failed traditions encapsulated in the idea of motherhood. She is an object on which society heaps its unfair practices and demands” (182).

Nnu Ego cannot achieve the respect in Ibuza and undergoes the disintegration of her first marriage. Now her position in the traditional society has a drastic change from a daughter of a powerful man to a helpless wife. She lacks the natural confidence to defy the society because she fails to be a true woman. She puts all the blame on herself and admits to her father, “I am sure the fault is on my side, you do everything right” (29). As Nicole Willey in *Ibuza VS. Lagos: The Feminist and Traditional* Buchi Emecheta says, “Because Nnu Ego and her culture place a premium on motherhood, she is easily destroyed by her inability to get pregnant and she lives restlessly in Ibuza and is rejected by both the people and the traditions” (62). Nnu Ego who lives restlessly in Ibuza rejected by both the people and traditions, leaves her native town for the urban city of Lagos to new husband she has never seen. As Patricia Mclean in her *The Joys of Motherhood Resists Feminist and Nationalist Readings* points out that, “Nnu Ego’s journey to Lagos represents the urban drift that brings about the breakdown of traditional Ibo society” (3).

When Nnu Ego arrives at Lagos she is disappointed to see her new husband Nnaife who works as washer man for a British family. She does not like his appearance and she was shocked to see that her perception of man as a male African was broken,

She fought back tears of frustration. She was used to tall, wiry farmers, with rough, blackened hands from farming, long, lean legs and very dark skin. This one is short, the flesh of his upper arm danced as he moved about jubilantly among his friends, and that protruding belly! (44).

Nnaife originally an Ibo man has moved to Lagos to work as a servant for the white family. He does not appear like other Ibo man as the impact of his environment which is seen in his appearance, "His hair, unlike that of men at Ibuza, was not closely shaved; he left a lot of it on his head, like that of a woman mourning for her husband . . . marrying such a man would be like living with a middle aged woman" (42). Nnu Ego compares her new husband to a woman, as she did not like his behaviour which is unmanly. She says to him, "I wouldn't have left the house of Amatokwu to come and live with a man who washes women's underwear. A man indeed!" (50). To Nnu ego, Nnaife appears to be more feminine because of his job as a laundry man. The impact of the colonial power can be seen through the physical appearance of colonized men like Nnaife in Lagos. Unlike the work in traditional Ibuza, the work in Lagos does not require physical strength. Nnu Ego describes Nnaife's appearance as, "a man with a belly like a pregnant cow, wobbling to this side and then to that. The belly, coupled with the fact that he was short, made him look like a barrel" (42). Emecheta uses Nnaife to detail how colonialism affected the African male from a female perspective.

In Lagos, Nnaife's role is determined not by culture and tradition but by the colonizers. Due to his job as a washer man to the white couple Mr. and Mrs. Meers, Nnaife practices Christianity and its services. If only colonized people obey the culture of their masters who pay them with money they could survive in this foreign land as Nnaife says to Nnu Ego, "If I do not marry you in church they will remove our names from the church register and Madam here will not like it. I may even lose my job" (51). Nnaife forced to abandon his own culture and tradition and adapt to a new culture by which he becomes more European and less African. As quoted in Stuart Hall's *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, "Colonization is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content . . . distorts, disfigures and destroys it" (227). Unlike in Iboya where men seek to enforce the tradition of the land and they were the main providers of the families, in Lagos a husband role is undefined as he is unable to become the primary sustainers of the family and women contribute to the income of the families. "Nnu Ego learned early in her married life to economise, since Nnaife earned a little" (49).

The environment of the colonial society makes it difficult to keep the familial ties. It also spoiled the African man's sense of responsibility. Unlike in Iboya where husbands never leave their familial ties, in Lagos there are no family ties to combine father, mother and children. The humiliation inflicted upon the husbands are reflected on their families especially wives. Wives are easily victimized by their own husbands because of the colonial system which seen through the dialogue of Cordelia,

Men here are too busy being the white man's servants to be men. We women mind the home. Not our husbands. Their manhood has been taken

away from them. The shame of it is that they don't know it. All they see is white man's money, shinning white man's money . . . they all are slaves, including us. If their masters treat them badly they take it out o us. The only difference is that they given some pay for their work, instead of having been bought (53).

Though Nnu Ego does not like the new environment or her husband Nnaife, she becomes overjoyed when she discovers her ability to produce children and she felt like a real woman who has a feminine identity. Her dream of motherhood was fulfilled as she gives birth to lot of children and she tries her best to adhere to traditions in a modern setting. She wants to be a woman of Ibuza in modern Lagos. But she is denied the maternal pride that mothers have in Ibuza. She falls prey to the capitalist system which promotes Western values of individualism over domestic responsibility. She becomes the victim of the new system where the tribal glorification of motherhood is not valued. She expresses her indignation towards the community of Lagos through how her situation would be if she were in Ibuza, "At home in Ibuza I would have had my own hut and would atleast have been treated as befitting my position" (153). She also struggles to feed her children because of the poverty. She does her best to feed her children by doing the pretty trade in the streets while Nnaife is away either working for a white family or taken to war to fight for the British. As Teresa Derrickson in her review on *Class, Culture and Colonial Context* says,

Nnu Ego's prompt capitulation renders her a victim as an African woman in a colonial capitalist western society . . . Nnu Ego's situation is shaped by a harsher economic setting where poverty is not alleviated by the

blessing of children because children are too much of a material liability in a place of such limited resources (7).

In both Ibuza and Lagos Nnu Ego becomes the victim of polygamy tradition. Atleast in the traditional Ibo society, polygamy gives extra power to the status of women as it allows them to share their burdens with their husbands. In Ibuza, Nnu becomes the co-wife when she is unable to bear a child. Though she did not like the position of the senior wife she has to accept it. In Lagos, with her second husband and giving birth to lot of children she becomes the co-wife when her husband's brother dies.

According to traditions of Ibuza Nnaife has to marry Adaku, the widow of his dead brother. Adaku comes to live with Nnu Ego in the same one-room apartment. Nnu Ego was not happy with her new status because it requires her to act as responsible senior wife without offering her the same benefits that once she had in the tribal community. She remarks "I can understand the value of being a senior wife in Ibuza, not here in Lagos" (150). Unlike Nnu Ego, Adaku had a balance between traditionalism and colonialism. She appears as a devoted mother who is willing to give her girl children the best education. Adaku develops a sense of adaptability and co-existence with the new environment in Lagos.

Adaku is the only women in the novel who becomes materially successful by making hard decisions that gives her freedom and education for her children. She is the beautiful and rebellious woman who refuses to allow motherhood, the mothering of sons in particular, to be her only defining trait. Adaku knows that Nnu Ego, her co-wife resents her but, "all she wanted was a home for her daughter and her future children . . . it was worth some humiliation to keep her children in the same family" (134). Adaku tries

to win the affection of Nnaife to secure her place in the new family. She tries to get accustomed with her co-wife by telling, “Nnu Ego that they were going to be sisters in this business of sharing her husband” (137). She even prepares to fight for rights through striking when Nnaife does not give enough money for the family and spent his money in drinking palm-wine. She also encourages Nnu Ego to joins in the strike by helping her senior wife in the marriage. When she was left on her own in Lagos, as Nnaife goes to fight in the war and Nnu Ego returns to her village Ibuza, she uses these opportunities for her business growth and becomes a wise investor in the trading business.

On seeing the changes around her, her husband who is far away from family who is fighting in the war and unable to provide for the family, Adaku makes use of the situation and spends most of her time in the market in order to survive on her own. She finally decides to leave the family which does not give her minimum support of friendship. She says to Nnu Ego, “I want to be a dignified single woman. I shall work to educate my daughters, though I shall not do so with male companionship”. Adaku combines her traditional attributes of ambition and industriousness with the adaptability that she needs in Lagos to create her own standards of life as she says, “I realise we women set impossible standards for ourselves. That we make life intolerable for one another. I cannot live up to your standards, senior wife. So I have to set my own” (189).

Unlike Adaku, Nnu Ego still clings to her tradition of motherhood with the hope that her old age would be a happy one. When her children grow up her miseries also increases. In spite of her miserable condition and poor financial support, she succeeds in giving her sons good education. She sends her sons abroad for education hoping that that they will be grateful after completing their studies and would help the family financially.

But her children who was brought up in Lagos is influenced by the urban culture of the colonial society. Nnu Ego sons Oshia and Adim become concerned only with their education and do not remain grateful to their mother as she expected them to be. Oshia leaves the country and do not provide financial support for their mother and her younger children when his father is in jail.

Nnu Ego later in the novel realises that the tradition of motherhood has imprisoned her she says, “she was imprisoned by the love of her children, imprisoned in her role as senior wife. She is not even expected to demand money for her family” (153). By being deserted by her sons, she returns to her native Ibuza and dies a lonely death in the road side with no children by her side. As a part of Nnu Ego’s funeral, her children build a shrine to her, allowing for her grandchildren to “appeal to her should they be barren” (253). But she never answers women’s prayer for children by which Nnu Ego shows her subversion to the tradition that ruled her life.

Throughout her life Nnu Ego is subjugated by both tradition and modernity. She is unable to survive in either of two communities. Her adherence to tradition could not save her in both Ibo society as well as in Lagos. Through Nnu Ego Emecheta wants to show that adherence to traditions under a colonizing system is foolish. Emecheta wants to highlight that though traditions and customs are the codes that govern the lives of people of any society, these codes should be questioned and likely to be changed in a rapidly changing world when a new system is introduced. Nnu Ego fails in adopting a survival tactics in the urban environment, so her dream of the kind of motherhood she has expected has never been fulfilled and it only turns to be the sorrows of motherhood. The next chapter is sums all previous chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Buchi Emecheta is the one of the most prolific and dexterous African writers who emerged from post-colonial Africa. She is distinguished for her vivid portrayal of female subordination and conflicting cultural values in modern Africa. Her writings explored the Igbo culture before and after colonialism impact and address the issue of women's conditions. She attempts to give voice to the ignored silent women within the Igbo patriarchal society. Her writing style can be contrasted with the prominent Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe whose sentences are soaked with idioms and phrases whereas Emecheta's style is simpler and direct. Her plot and characters expresses the cultural information and the character's feeling. She has been seen as feminist writer as she wrote about women and their lives issues. But she does not consider herself as a feminist writer, as she herself says in Njoki Nathani Wane, *Indigenous African Knowledge production*,

Being a woman, and African born, I see things through an African Woman's eyes. I chronicle the title of happiness in the lives of African women I did not know that by doing so I was going to be called a feminist.

But If am now a feminist then I am a feminist with a small 'f' (14)

Emecheta do not want to be called as a feminist as it is the western ideology and preferred to be called as womanist which is the movement for Black women, as Shalani Nadaswaran in *Legacy of Buchi Emecheta in Nigerian Women's Fiction* says, "We find Buchi Emecheta being defensive and indignant whenever she is referred to as feminist. In fact, Buchi Emecheta states that her type of feminism is an African type of feminism called womanism" (146). She struggles for the position of women in the Nigerian society

and tries to liberate them from all kind of oppression and domination which discriminated women. Through her works she tries to give voice to the silenced women in the Nigerian patriarchal society.

Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* tells not only the story of Nnu Ego but the problems of all women encountered by them when they experience delay in giving birth to the children. The novel emphasises the value of fertility. Fertility is one of the important aspects of African society. In the African society, children are not only seen as an important aspect of social security system but also as an important source of labour power. Children are considered as a women's highest achievement. The woman without the children is considered as a failed woman. But when a woman has many children her life becomes unending drudgery. As the protagonist of the novel Nnu Ego is considered as a failed woman in her first marriage when she is unable to produce a child but when she gives birth to lot of children in her second marriage she undergoes sufferings in bringing up the child. So the children represent not only joys and happiness but also pains and sorrows. As Emecheta in her autobiography *Head Above Water* states that, "I created a woman, Nnu Ego, who gave her all energy, all her money and everything she had to raise her kids . . . she never reaped the fruit of her labour" (9).

The novel also seeks to speak for the position of women who are marginalised by race and gender. The novel is the graphical representation of the ordeal of women and women related issues, as Uwachina in *Technique and Language in Buchi Emecheta's the Bride Price, the Slave Girl and The Joys of Motherhood* says, "In Emecheta's novel, women oppression is the subject of her writing. *The Joys of Motherhood* tells us about a displaced and neglected woman" (6). The novel captures the pathetic and grim condition

of a woman who in spite of her struggle and determination to survive in life ends up dying in ignominy.

The protagonist of the novel Nnu Ego was brought up in the traditional Ibuza, which is rich in its own values and customs. Nnu ego was brought up in a society where men are considered as a source of power and master of the houses and women should obey and fulfil men's needs and desires. Women in the traditional society are considered as a commodity who can be bought and sold. Nnu Ego was married to a man who paid the high bride price to marry her. As Mango Beti in *Perpetue et L'habitude du Malheur* says, "The bride price becomes the chain that a woman is tied by" (4). But Nnu Ego becomes a failed woman in her first marriage when she is unable to become a mother. She is dismissed and disregarded by her husband Amatokwu. He reduces her to a farm help. When Nnu Ego complains about it, he says, "What do you want me to do . . . I am a busy man. I have no time to waste my precious male seed on a woman who is infertile" (31). Through this quotation Emecheta tries to highlights the extent of women's dehumanization. Women are considered as a means of reproduction and that they do not deserve a life if they fail to produce children. The tradition does not allow them to have the individuality and anything as their own and if they are women then they are men's property and their appendage.

Emecheta describes a traditional Nigerian society in which women are subjugated to male authority because they are women, inferior other and they are considered as rational and intelligent as men are. Most of the decision in the novel is taken by men. Agbadi, father of Nnu Ego arranges second marriage for her when she failed to produce without her consent. He takes this decision against Nnu Ego's mother Ona, who wanted

for her daughter to have a life to call on her own, a life set by her own rules. Through Ona, Emecheta tries to present an extended platform for possibilities of women. But those possibilities are shattered for Ona, as she was made to live according to her father's wish,

Ona grew up to fill her father's expectation. He had maintained that she must never marry; his daughter was never going to stoop any man. She was free to have men, however, and if she bore a son, he would take her father's name, thereby rectifying the omission nature had made (7).

But Ona dies without fulfilling her father's wish, as in her death bed she says to Agbadi, "Allow Nnu Ego to have a life on her own, a husband if she wants one. Allow her to be a woman" (26). She knows that the culture doesn't allow a girl to have the freedom of choosing the man of her own so she wants to defy the traditions and customs that govern her community.

Nnu Ego was not given the freedom as her mother Ona expected her to have. Nnu Ego's father arranges a second marriage for her with a man who lives in the distant city of Lagos because Nnu Ego is unfit to live in an Igbo society which holds the high value of giving birth to a child as Agbadi says, "Let her go, . . . she is as barren as a desert" (39). Here Emecheta highlights that Nnu Ego is compelled by the tradition of her native culture to move to another society with a different cultural background. In Ibadan, she finds that her husband Nnaife works as a washer man under a white family. Though she doesn't like her husband because of his job and his appearance which is more feminine she becomes happy when she becomes pregnant and starts to give birth to a lot of children. But her happiness doesn't last long because of the new system of Lagos which made her

husband incapable of providing sufficiently to sustain his family. Nnu Ego's dream of motherhood was fulfilled but she is not able to enjoy the happiness of being a mother because of the difficult economic conditions of the new urban environment, as Teresa Derrickson in *Class Culture and the Colonial Context: The Status of Women in Buchi Emecheta's The Joys of Motherhood* says, "Nnu Ego lives under a system where poverty is not alleviated by the blessings of children because children are too much of a material liability in a place of such limited resources" (7).

Most of the time in the novel Nnu Ego being alone as her husband was absent most of time by working in ship and fighting in the World War II she becomes responsible for feeding her children. When she runs shortage of money she begs Nnaife for money in order to feed her children but Nnaife says, "I'm not giving you a penny, because I haven't a penny to give. It's your responsibility to feed your children as best as you can" (152). Through this Emecheta highlights how a woman is treated as subject of oppression by the patriarchal relations. She is not but a man's slave, surrounded by responsibilities determined for her. Nnu Ego sacrifices herself because she is a mother. She does the pretty business, sells firewood all for the sake of her children. She even saves money for her son's education but her sons at the end of the novel do not remain grateful to her and leaves abroad for their education. Nnu Ego who devoted her youth, health and life for children was left alone in her old age, as she says, "she was imprisoned by the love for her children. . . it was not fair she felt, the way men cleverly used a woman's sense of responsibility to actually enslave her" (153).

Through the characters of Agunwa, Nnu Ego and Adaku, Emecheta shows how the practice of polygamy oppresses women. Agbadi neglected his senior wife Agunwa in

favour of Ona, his new mistress. This act of negligence leads to the death of his senior wife Agunwa. Nnu Ego is also oppressed in patriarchal society when she is forced to play the role of the 'Senior Wife'. Nnaife inherits Adaku as his wife after the death of his elder brother, which is the practice in Igbo culture. Though Nnu Ego was not happy about this inheritance, she cannot complain against the practice of the Igbo tradition. Adaku for a short time suffers under the patriarchal system but soon she frees herself from the polygamous marriage. On seeing the changes around her in Lagos, her husband who is far away from family who is fighting in the war and unable to provide for the family, Adaku makes use of the situation and spends most of her time in the market in order to survive on her own. She finally decides to leave the family, she says to Nnu Ego, "I want to be a dignified single woman. I shall work to educate my daughters, though I shall not do so with male companionship" (191).

Nnu Ego who is contrasted with Adaku had hope in her sons who would take care of her in the old age. Female children in the novel are considered as commodities and as source of income. Nnu Ego herself believes that female children are inferior to male children and they have to work so as to make for the male children. Nnu Ego does not send her daughters to school like her sons instead she makes her daughters to help her in the domestic chores. Nnaife arranges the marriage for his daughter Taiwo against her wish as she is in love with butcher's son. He is against the wish of his daughter's wish to marry the butcher's son because he considers that the butcher's family are not rich enough to pay him high bride price he expects. Nnaife ends up in jail for trying to kill the butcher, when his daughter elopes with the butcher's son. Nnu Ego was left alone in Lagos as her sons Oshia and Adim whom she expected that they would support the

family financially leaves her alone. Because of the influence western education her sons become more materialistic and do not care to look after the family and go abroad for their studies and job. At this point she realises that children did not always bring fulfilment, she ruminates, “God when will you create woman who will be fulfilled in herself, a full human being not anybody’s appendage? (209). Nnu Ego becomes victim of the new environment. Her adherence to the tradition in the modern city of Lagos could not save her but leaves alone with nobody to take care of her. Nnu Ego returns to her native village where she dies a lonely death not even with one of seven children by her side. Her sons only arrive after her death and built a shrine for their mother.

Through the character of Nnu Ego Emecheta shows the fact how motherhood is made as the sole part of womanhood. Emecheta does not try to criticize the motherhood but she tries to criticize the way the patriarchal institution defines motherhood by which women are oppressed and dominated. A woman needs to conceive to fulfil her husband’s wish but it never becomes a concern that if the woman desired it or not. Through Nnu Ego Emecheta shows how a woman, her wishes, desires and hopes are trapped in her own body, as she says, “On my life, I have to work myself to the bone to after my children. I have to give them all. And if am lucky enough to die in peace, I even have to give them my soul” so she asks god, “When will I be free” (210). Through this monologue Nnu Ego reflects how patriarchy prohibits women from fulfilling their own dreams. The independence she sought for all her life was never given to her. Therefore, after her death she refuses to fulfil any woman’s wish to become a mother. By doing so she protested against the patriarchal society and male domination. As Eustace Palmer in *A Powerful Female Voice in the African Novel* describes, “*The Joys Of Motherhood* as the first work

in African literature to present the female point of view in registering its disgust at male chauvinism and patriarchy's satisfaction with an unfair or oppressive system towards women" (157), Buchi Emecheta gives Nnu Ego the power to assert her rights above the social obligation of her womanhood. She seems to assert that motherhood does not determine womanhood and there seems to be more to it. Joys of motherhood is just a paradoxical element. The study thus validates the title, "Crisis of Womanhood: A Sociocultural Reading of Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*".

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Imagination Vs Reason: A Thematic Analysis of Harper Lee's

To Kill a Mockingbird

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

VISHVITHA.X

(REG. NO. 19APEN28)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

Chapter	Title	Page No.
One	Introduction	7
Two	Racial Prejudice	17
Three	Gothic Traits	27
Four	Vision of Children	36
Five	Summation	45
	Works Cited	55

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Imagination Vs Reason: A Thematic Analysis of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Vishvitha.X during the year 2019-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Guide

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Imagination Vs Reason: A Thematic Analysis of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

Vishvitha.X

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PREFACE

This project entitled **Imagination Vs Reason: A Thematic Analysis of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*** highlights the spiritual journey of the author and also his growing awareness on his own part. It leads to the realisation that imagination cannot be divorced from reason in one's apprehension of reality. Harper Lee lived in New York and worked in the reservation department of an international airline. She has been awarded the Pulitzer and library awards.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Harper Lee's life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of her work and the novel chosen for study. Focuses on Lee's observation of her family and it deals with serious issues of rape and racial inequality.

The second chapter **Racial Prejudice** deals with the racial conflict. It discusses how racism defines the life of white people as good and bad.

The third chapter **Gothic Trails** focuses on the gothic settings of Boo Radley's house. It explains about the seven gothic traits: a castle, crime, religion, a ghostly or demonic figure, magic, the phenomena of nature, and a gothic villain.

The fourth chapter **Vision of Children** concentrates on the romantic vision of child it is expressed, according to Charles Babentroth, by beliefs in the innocence.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of this project.

Introduction

Chapter One

American literature, is the body of written works produced in English language, the United States like the national literatures, American literature was shaped by the history of the country that produced it. For almost a century and half, America was merely a group of colonies scattered along the seaboard of the North American continent colonies from which a few hardy souls tentatively ventured westward. After a successful rebellion the motherland, America became the United States, a nation extended southward to the pacific.

American literature is literature written or produced in the United States and it's proceeding colonies. Before the founding of the United States, the literature. The American literary tradition thus began as part of the broader tradition of English literature. American poetry reached a peak after the World War I, American drama attained international status at the time of Eugene O' Neill. From the end of the World War II unit the late twentieth century ethnic and minority literature has sharply increased.

American literature is that the devotion it is a comparison to the true opinions of the author. The effort American writes have in literature is because of their role with depicting one idea, but meaning another. American literature knows how to employ love and yearning for another to condemn society, people, self, church, or nature and the ruthless theme American literature beholds. Various writers complement this idea with their morbid and dark pieces.

Harper Lee contemporaries are Karen White, Sarah Pekkanen, Liza Palmer, Kristina Mc Morris, Andrea Randall, Julia Claiborne Johnson, Diana Chamberlin, Elin Hilderbrand, Lucinda Riley, Doorathy Koomson, Rosie Thomas, Amy Harmon, Lucy Robinson, Sarra Manning, Bill Clegg, Elisabeth Egan, and Karina Halle.

Lee was born on April 28, 1926, in Monroeville, Alabama. The youngest of four children, she grew up as a tomboy in a small town. Her Father was a lawyer, a member of the Alabama state legislature and also owned part of the local newspaper. Her mother suffered from mental illness, rarely leaving the house, It is believed that she may have had bipolar disorder Lee was known for being a loner and an individualist. She did make a greater attempt at a social life there, joining a sorority for a while.

Pursuing her interest in writing, Lee contributed to the school's newspaper and its humor magazine, the Rammer Jammer, eventually becoming the publication's editor. In her junior year, Lee was accepted into the university's law school, which allowed students to work on law degrees while allowed students to work on law degree while still undergraduates. The demands of her law studies forced her to leave her post as Rammer Jameer.

After her first year in the program, Lee began expressing to her family that writing not the law was her true calling. She went to the University of Oxford in England that summer as an exchange student. Returning to her law studies that fall, Lee dropped out the first semester. She soon moved north to follow her dreams to become a writer.

In 1949, the 23 year old Lee arrived in New York City. She struggled for several years, working as a ticket agent for Eastern Airlines and for the British Overseas Air Corp (BOAC). While in the city, Lee befriended Broadway composer and lyricist Michael Martin Brown and his wife Joy. In 1956, the Browns gave Lee an impressive

Christmas present to support her for a year so that she could write full time. She quit her job and devoted herself to her craft.

The Browns also helped her find an agent, Maurice Crain. He was able to get publisher J.B. Lippincott Company interested in her work. Working with editor Tay Hohoff, Lee worked on a manuscript set in a small Alabama town, which eventually became her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

One of Lee's closest childhood friends was another writer to be, Truman Capote. Tougher than many of the boys, Lee often stepped up to serve as Truman's childhood protector. Truman, who shared few interests with his age, was picked on for being sensitive and for the fancy clothes he wore. While the two friends were very different, they both had difficult home lives. Truman was living with his mother's relatives in town after largely being abandoned by his own parents.

While in New York City in the 1950s, Lee was reunited with her old friend Capote, who was by then one of the literary rising stars of the time. In 1956, Lee joined forces with Capote to assist him with an article he was writing for *The New Yorker*, Capote was writing about the impact of the murder of four members of the Clutter family on their small Kansas farming community.

The two travelled to Kansas to interview townspeople, friends and family of the deceased and the investigators working to solve the crime. Serving as his research assistant, Lee helped with the interviews, eventually winning over some of the locals with her easygoing, unpretentious manner. Truman, with his flamboyant personality and style, had a hard time initially getting himself into his subjects' good graces. During their time in Kansas, the Clutters' suspected killers, Richard Hickock and Perry Smith, were caught in Las Vegas and brought back for questioning. Lee and Capote got a chance to interview the suspects not after their arraignment in January 1960.

After Lee and Capote returned to New York. She worked on the galley for her forthcoming first novel while he started working on his article, which would evolve into the nonfiction masterpiece *In Cold Blood*. The pair returned to Kansas for the murder trial. Lee gave Capote all of her notes on the crime, the victims, the killers, the local communities and much more.

Lee worked with Capote on and off on *In Cold Blood*. She had been invited by Smith and Hickock to witness their execution in 1956, but she declined. When Capote's book was finally published in 1966, a rift developed between the two collaborators for a time. Capote dedicated the book to Lee and his longtime lover, Jack Dunphy, but failed to acknowledge her contributions to the work. While Lee was very angry and hurt by this betrayal, she remained friends with Capote for the rest of his life.

Lee published two books in her lifetime: *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) and *Go Set a Watchman* (2015). She also worked on and off with her friend Capote on his famed book, *In Cold Blood* (1966). She published six articles: "Love- In other words. Vogue (1961), "Christmas to me". McCall's (1961), "When Children discover America"(1965), "Romance and High Adventure".(1983). A paper presented in Eufaula, Alabama, and collected in the anthology *Clearings in the Thicket* (1985). And last "Open letter to Winfrey". O, The Oprah Magazine (2006).

Go Set a Watchman was submitted to a publisher in 1957. When the book wasn't accepted, Lee's editor asked her to revise the story and make her main character Scout child. The author worked on the story for two years and it eventually became *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Lee's *Go Set a Watchman* was thought to be lost until it was discovered by her lawyer Tonja Carter in a safe deposit box. In February 2015. *Go Set a Watchman* features Mockingbird Scout 26-year old woman on her way back home to Maycomb, Alabama, from New York City. Scout's father Atticus, the upstanding moral conscience

of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, is portrayed as a racist with bigoted views and ties to the Ku Klux Klan.

The controversial novel and shocking portrayal of a beloved character sparked debated among fans, and offered literary scholars and students fodder for analyzing the author's creative process. Lee's second novel also broke pre-sale records for Harper Collins. With reports of 88 year old Lee's faltering health, questions arose about whether the publication was the author's decision.

In July 1960, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published and picked up by the Book of the Month Club and the Literary Guild. A condensed version of the story appeared in Reader's Digest magazine. The following year, the novel won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize and several other literary wards. A classic of American literature, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been translated into more than 40 languages with more than a million copies sold each year. The work was more than a coming of age story: another part of the novel reflected racial prejudices in the South. Their attorney father, Atticus Finch, tries to help a Black man who has been charged with raping a white woman to get a fair trial and to prevent him from being lynched by angry white people in a small town.

Lee published her second novel, *Go Set a Watchman*, in July 2015. The story was essentially a first draft of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and followed the later lives of the novel's characters. But even that message didn't put an end to questions: In a 2011 letter, Lee's sister Alice had written that Lee would sign anything put before her by any one in whom she has confidence. However, others who had met with Lee stated that she was behind the decision to publish. Alabama officials investigated and found no evidence that she was a victim of coercion.

Playwright Horton Foote wrote a screenplay based on the book and used the same title for a 1962 *To Kill a Mockingbird* movie adaptation. Lee visited the set during

filming and did a lot of interviews to support the project. The movie version of *To Kill a Mockingbird* earning eight Academy Award nominations and won three awards, including the best actor award for Gregory Peck's portrayal of Finch . The character is said to have been based on Lee's father.

In the mid-1960s, Lee was reportedly working on another novel, but it was never published and in 1966, Lee had an operation on her hand to repair the damage done by a bad burn. She also accepted a post on the National Council of the Arts at the request of President Lyndon B. Johnson. During the 1970s and 80s Lee largely retreated from public life she spent some of her time on a nonfiction book project about an Alabama serial killer which had the working title *The Reverend*. This work, however, was never published. Lee generally lived a quiet, private life, splitting her time between New York City and her hometown of Monroeville. In Monroeville, she lived with her older sister Alice Lee, a lawyer who the author called as Atticus in a skirt Lee's sister was a close confidant who often took care of the author's legal and financial affairs.

Active in her church and community, Lee became famous for avoiding the spotlight of her celebrity. She would often use the wealth she had accumulated from her success to make anonymous philanthropic donations to various charitable causes. In November 2007, President George W. Bush presented Lee with the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her outstanding contribution to America's literary tradition at a ceremony at the White House. Her sister Alice once said about Lee that Books are the things she cares about. With the assistance of a magnifying device necessary due to her macular degeneration Lee was able to keep reading despite her ailments.

In May 2013, Lee filed a lawsuit in federal court against literary agent Samuel Pinkus, Changing that, in 2007, Pinkus was engaged in a scheme to dupe her out of the copyright to *To Kill a Mockingbird*, later diverting royalties from the work. In

September 2013, a settlement was reached in the lawsuit. Later that year, Lee's legal team filed suit against the Monroe country heritage museum located in Monroeville for trying to capitalize on the fame of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and for museum later filed a joint motion to end the suit, and the case was dismissed by a federal judge in February 2014.

That same year, Lee allowed her famous work to be released as an e-book. She signed a deal with Harper Collins for the company to release *To Kill a Mockingbird* as an e-book and digital audio editions. In a release shared by the publisher, Lee explained that she is still old fashioned. She loves dusty books and libraries.

To Kill a Mockingbird takes place in the fictional town of Maycomb, Alabama, during the great depression. The protagonist Jean Louise Finch, is an intelligent though unconventional girl who ages from six to nine years old during the course of the novel. She is raised with her brother, Jeremy Atticus, by their widowed father, Atticus Finch. He is a prominent lawyer who encouraged his children to be empathetic and just. He notable tells them that it is a sin to kill a mockingbird alluding to the fact that the birds are innocent and harmless. When Tom Robinson, one of the town's Black residents, is falsely accused of raping Mayella Ewell, a white woman, Atticus agrees to defend him despite threats from the community. At one point he faces a mob intent on violence his client but refuses to abandon him. Scout unintentionally diffuses the situation. Although Atticus presents a defense that gives a more plausible interpretation of the evidence that Mayella was attacked by her father, Bob Ewell- Tom is convicted, and he is later killed while trying to escape custody. A character his death to the senseless slaughter of songbirds.

The children play out their own miniaturized drama of prejudice and superstition as they become interested in Arthur Radley, a reclusive neighbor who is a

local legend. They have their own ideas about him and cannot resist the allure of trespassing on the Radley property. Their speculations flourish on the dehumanization perpetuated by their attitude. Boo makes his presence felt indirectly through a series of benevolent acts, finally intervening when Bob Ewell attacks Jem and Scout. Boo kills Ewell, but Heck Tate, the sheriff, believes it is better to say that Ewell's death occurred when he fell on his own knife, sparing the shy Boo from unwanted attention. Scout agrees, nothing that to do otherwise would be sort of like shootin a mockingbird.

The importance of the domestic space and the family in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is explored by Austin Sarat and Martha Merrill Umphrey, Thomas L. Dumm and James B. Kelley. In the novel, distinctions between how social code is upheld differs depending on space . Scout first encounters the difference between public and social space when she starts school and is disciplined by her teacher for speaking in an improper manner.

To Kill a Mockingbird is both a young girl's coming of age story and a darker drama about the roots and consequences of racism and prejudice probing how good and evil can coexist within a single community or individual. Scout's moral education is twofold: to resist abusing others with unfounded negativity but also to persevere when these values are inevitably and sometimes violently, subverted. Lee reportedly based the character of Atticus Finch on her father, Amasa Coleman Lee, a compassionate and dedicated lawyer. The plot of *To Kill a Mockingbird* was inspired in part by this unsuccessful youthful defense of two African American men convicted of murder. Criticism of the novel's tendency to sermonize has been matched by praise of its insight and stylistic effectiveness. Lee tried to answer personally correspondence from fans, but when she began receiving more than 60 letters daily, she realized the demands on her time were too great. Her Sister Alice became her lawyer, and Lee obtained an

unlisted telephone number to reduce distraction from many people seeking interviews or public appearances. From the time of the publication of *To Kill a Mockingbird* until her death in 2016, Lee granted almost no request for interviews or public appearances and, with the exception of a few short essays, published nothing further until 2015. She worked on a follow-up novel *The Long Goodbye* but eventually field it away unfinished. Lee also assumed significant care responsibilities for her father, who was thrilled with her success, and even began signing autographs as Atticus Finch. However, his health worsened and he died in Alabama on April 15, 1962. She decided to spend more time in New York City as she mourned, but over the decades her friend Capote became embroiled in a flamboyant jet-set lifestyle far from her preference for anonymity and a more Spartan lifestyle. Lee preferred to visit friends at their homes though she came to distance herself from who criticized her drinking, and also made unannounced appearances at libraries or other gatherings, particularly in Monroeville.

Lee died on February 19, 2016, at the age of 89. Her nephew Hank Connor, said the author died in her sleep. In 2007, Lee suffered a stroke and struggled with various ongoing health issues, including hearing loss, limited vision and problems with her short-term memory. After the stroke, Lee moved into an assisted living facility in Monroeville. Around the time of Lee's death in 2016, it was announced that producer Scott Rudin had hired Aaron Sorkin to write a stage version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. In March 2018, several months before the production's scheduled Broadway debut, Lee's estate filed a lawsuit on the grounds that Sorkin's adaptation significantly deviated from the original material. A main point of contention was the play's portrayal of Finch, which reportedly showed him in early scenes as more in step with the oppressive racial feelings of the time, as opposed to the heroic crusader of the novel.

This project explains the role of imagination and reason which plays a major role in the lives of the characters. Racial prejudice of white people and the black people is dealt in the forth coming chapter. The next chapter deals with the racial conflict. It discusses how racism defines the life of white people as good and bad.

Chapter Two

Racial Prejudice

Prejudice is as rigid and unfair generalization about an entire category of people. Prejudice derives from the word prejudgment, which implies that a person makes up his or her mind about something without any real knowledge about it. It can also be

meant as prejudice of people in negative belief toward certain people because they are membership in a particular group in society.

Prejudice can cause many serious problems in society, because it can lead discrimination, segregation, hostility, and oppression. So, we can also define prejudice in the other words as a set of attitudes which causes, supports, or justifies them against the other people in the society. Therefore, prejudice is a rigid and unfair generalization that creates negative prejudgment toward particular member of group without any real knowledge. Prejudice is an emotional component of people's reaction to other groups, also a deeply felt set of feelings about what is good and bad, right and wrong, so forth. Someone or group in society are potential to get prejudice from the others or almost people in the society, they can be victim because they are different in some way.

Racial prejudice is frequently used to justify keeping a group in a subordinate position such as a lower social class. Conflict theorists, in particular, stress the role of racial and ethnic hostility as a way for the dominant group to keep intact its position of status and power. Indeed, this approach maintains that even the less-affluent White working class uses prejudice to minimize competition from upwardly mobile minorities. Racial prejudice is often experienced by the people in minority in society, and of course the doer is people in majority. Some people called themselves and the others who have similarities as in-group. Then another people who different from them are called out-groups. When racial prejudice is done by somebody or group in society, they will not be able to give an objective assessment toward the others. Therefore, they will look everything in negative way before understanding them closer. Racial prejudice is attitude, belief, and thought which often causes some negative actions in society.

However racial prejudice is not always occurred between different groups, but it can be experienced by someone who has difference among people in his own group. Consequently, racial prejudice gives some troubles in society, because it has serious effects in social life that can bother road of life in society.

Racial prejudice often takes the form of a stereotype. Stereotype can be positive or negative, but it is often negative. Stereotype is not just regular perception or assessment toward somebody else or the other groups. Yet, it can cause serious problem in social life. It can lead racial prejudice which bothers harmonic life in society.

Scapegoating is another mechanism that fuels prejudice, scapegoat is a person or category of people, typically with little power, whom blame for their own troubles unfairly, because minority is usually safe target for this case. They are blamed for a wide variety of things that they could not possibly have caused. The subordinate people will be the victims of racial prejudice in society, because they do not have enough power to give reaction.

There are many evidence that can describe racial prejudice happened in Lee's *To Kill a Mocking Bird*: As a form of racial prejudice, rumors can cause a great deal of harm to the individual that is being targeted. Rumors can easily obscure the truth about a person because they are basically lies, opinions, and incorrect observations about the individual in question.

In *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, Boo Radley is one of the example of an individual who suffered from this form of racial prejudice. The prejudice of Radley family and Boo Radley makes somebody else afraid of closing Radley's house, because opinions have been formed if people walk near Radley place or take and eat everything from it, they will get dangerous thing that threat their life. Therefore, they will believe that Radley's are very dangerous people. Negative assumptions have installed in their mind

for long time and those cannot be changed easily. They will always suppose to Boo Radley and his families are dangerous and wicked people in society. “The Radley Place was inhabited by an unknown entity the mere description of whom was enough to make us behave for days on end; Mrs. Dubose was plain hell” (7).

All of the statements of Boo Radley never happen in society. He just does on mistake that make the people punish him with immortal title in the society. Actually, there are kindnesses which have been done by Boo Radley, and they prove to Scout and Jem that people’s words are just prejudices without basis against somebody. They get information about him from Miss Maudie and they experience some things with their unexpected company, Boo Radley that can change their mind about him.

Boo Radley and Tom Robinson share many similarities in spite of fact that one man is white and the other is black. As a black, Tom Robinson faced the racial prejudice that many blacks endured during the 1930s in the Deep South. Tom Robinson is prejudged because of his color. He is prejudged by many people. Tom Robinson trial’s become the greatest example of injustice of racial prejudice is seen.

Many people in society whether they are old or young will always feel different from the others, if they keep in mind that they are different from others gradually. Even the children who are innocence toward this life can feel if certain people are different from them. In the journey of time, Maycomb people adapt Radley’s customs. But, then prejudgments are become viable among people in society. Without knowing where the information about Radley, especially Boo Radley comes from, most of people prejudices them in negative labels. Hence, no one wants to get along with them. Those prejudices succeed to frighten major people in Maycomb County. Therefore, the differences can emerge prejudice in society because it is kept in mind strongly installed by hyperbole stories. Prejudice emerged from differences among people in the society

that cause feeling of superior in certain people also argued that prejudice exists in society because people have feelings or prejudice about various of different traits, cultural background and practice, and the other differences, in this case, the difference is supposed as strangeness, because it is a new thing and never done before in the society.

Therefore most of the people in society feel that it is not part of their culture, ideology, and their traits. Consequently, most of all people in society cannot accept the differences in their community's life, and it makes them prejudice easily. Those people have low tolerance and inflexibility for accepting diversity. They want to see everything is similar with their culture. They will give some negative labels for different people or groups such as inferior, immature, or degenerate. Hence, racial prejudice will be more developed in society toward some people or groups that are supposed to be different.

In Henslin, *A Down-to-Earth Approach* gave the other opinions about relationship between differences and prejudice. He said that difference can emerge negative perceptions against certain people or group, because they are not similar with them. Besides, it can make someone exaggerates his ethnic, race, language, or his custom. Henslin also added that those things are not true, because if they stuck in people's mind for long time, they can be dangerous problem in the society.

The difference creates racial prejudice in people's mind towards the others. Therefore, when certain people prejudice the others because they cannot accept the differences, they will show various negative treatments toward the others. When differences create difference in people's mind, it will stimulate certain people or group to be superior to others. This thought was very dangerous for human's life, because they will always use differences as reason to prejudice another human, whereas those differences come naturally.

Racial prejudice is a great obstacle in people's communication process in society. It is one of roots problem in social life which has various impacts in social interaction and of course it disturbs social stability. Moreover racial prejudice even can lead extreme effect for society. Racial prejudice can cause social distance in society. Consciously, racial prejudice will create gulf between major and minor group in society, because prejudiced people give social distance toward another groups or some individuals. They feel their culture or what they have are superior to be others. Therefore they close their intention toward what they say minority. Further, there is a serious condition that makes one group is really separated with another group, that is segregation. Segregation is defined as physical and social separation of categories of people, some minorities especially religious orders voluntarily segregate themselves, but usually majorities segregate minorities in society.

Hence it is argued that segregation gives possibility for certain groups usually majorities to keep social distance with minorities in social life. Residential neighborhoods, schools, occupations, hospitals, and even cemeteries may be segregated. It may be applied to activities such as eating in restaurants, drinking from water fountains, using public toilets, attending schools, going to movies, riding buses, renting or purchasing homes or renting hotel rooms. In addition, segregation often allows close contact between members of different racial or ethnic groups in hierarchical situations, such as allowing a person of one race to work as a servant for a member of another race. Thus segregation can be done in every aspect of life, from the smallest facility until the most important facility in their country. Indeed, it is an attempt to isolate a minority from the majority. This case strengthens the minority that they are really inferior in society.

Segregation is defined by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance as the act by which a person separates other persons on the basis of one of the enumerated grounds without an objective and reasonable justification, in conformity with the proposed definition of discrimination. As a result, the voluntary act of separating oneself from other people on the basis of one of the enumerated grounds does not constitute segregation. According to the UN Forum on Minority Issues, the creation and development of classes and schools providing education in minority languages should not be considered impermissible segregation, if the assignment to such classes and schools is of a voluntary nature. Racial segregation has generally been outlawed worldwide. In the United States, racial segregation was mandated by law in some states and enforced along with anti-miscegenation laws, until the U.S. Supreme Court led by Chief Justice Earl Warren struck down racial segregationist laws throughout the United States. However, racial segregation may exist *de facto* through social norms, even when there is no strong individual preference for it, as suggested by Thomas Schelling's models of segregation and subsequent work. Segregation may be maintained by means ranging from discrimination in hiring and in the rental and sale of housing to certain races to vigilante violence.

A situation that arises when members of different races mutually prefer to associate and do business with members of their own race would usually be described as separation or *de facto* separation of the races rather than segregation.

Discrimination is taken as result of prejudicial feelings too, prejudice and discrimination reinforce to each other. However, closely related to prejudice is discrimination, because prejudice is rather similar than discrimination, but actually they are different. Racial prejudice refers to the attitude and discrimination refers to action.

Macdonald also defines that discrimination as unequal treatment of various categories of people.

Discrimination is the denial of opportunities and equal rights to individuals and groups because of prejudice or arbitrary reasons. Furthermore it is argued that prejudice can be the background of discrimination, because negative prejudgment can stimulate individual or group to discriminate the others.

Discrimination can be done in every aspect of society. It can happen in institutions, public facilities, and social relationships. Therefore, there are individual discrimination and institutional discrimination that are gotten by certain people in the society. There are many cases that describe the discrimination in society. As what experienced by African American in United State when many American communities denied the same right to vote for black citizens. That is just an example of discrimination's cases, and there are still many cases of discrimination usually cannot make people get humane treatments.

Not only discrimination which becomes the impact of racial prejudice, but also oppression in society toward certain people. According to Conflict Theory, prejudice is a tool by major group to oppress others. Minorities are also more likely to be crime victims in society. They can get violence or even killing from the other people hate them.

The oppression has certain similarity with the other impacts of racial prejudice. They are very dangerous for social life, because those are actions which are done by ignoring humanity in life. People who discriminate and oppress the others usually do in illogically way even in extreme way. They do not humanize human. Despite minor people are not guilty, but they are always become scapegoat to legitimate discrimination or oppression. Racial prejudice leads some impacts in social life. It bores social distance

among social groups in society which has an extreme form, segregation, discrimination that treats everyone depend on differences and oppression which ignore humanity.

Racial prejudice can create social distance between majority and minority in society. Majority will not want to get along with people in minority, because they feel minority is different from them and they are superior in society. In Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, white people will get along with another white people, and blacks do too. Blacks and Whites in Maycomb County never have a seat together to drink some glasses of tea like what white people do on Sunday. Blacks and Whites just keep interaction in occupation.

African-Americans experienced many sad histories in their state. They experienced discriminations, segregations, oppressions, and the other cases in their social life, because they were supposed as minority in the society.

Racism against various ethnic or minority groups has existed in the United States since the colonial era. African Americans in particular have faced restrictions on their political, social, and economic freedoms throughout much of United States history. Native Americans have suffered genocide, forced removals, and massacres, and they continue to face discrimination. Non-Protestant immigrants from Europe, particularly Jews, Irish people, Poles, and Italians were often subjected to xenophobic exclusion and other forms of ethnicity-based discrimination. In addition, East, South, and Southeast Asians along with Pacific Islanders have also been discriminated against. Hispanics have continuously experienced racism in the United States despite the fact that many of them have European ancestry. Middle Eastern groups such as Arabs and Iranians continuously face discrimination in the United States.

Racism has manifesting way including genocide, slavery, segregation, Native American reservations, Native American boarding schools, immigration and

naturalization laws, and internment camps. Formal racial discrimination was largely banned by the mid-20th century and over time, coming to be perceived as being socially and morally unacceptable. Racial politics remains a major phenomenon, and racism continues to be reflected in socioeconomic inequality.

In recent years research has uncovered extensive evidence of racial discrimination in various sectors of modern U.S. society, including the criminal justice system, business, the economy, housing, health care, the media, and politics. In the view of the United Nations and the U.S. Human Rights Network, discrimination in the United States permeates all aspects of life and extends to all communities of color.

Being African-American in Alabama in the 1930s was not easy. Because in 1930s African-Americans had only free citizens for sixty-five years. It is because racial discrimination and prejudice were still common in Alabama. Until 1960s there was a policy of segregation, which meant separate facilities, such as schools, toilets and restaurants for Whites and African-Americans.

Undoubtedly racism has negative consequences, key among them being fear and violence, as a result of a need to protect themselves. One major cause of racism is ignorance. Uneducated and unexposed feel threatened by people of a different race. Such people condone and practice this prejudice without considering it has negative effects and consequences on both the individuals they are discriminating and the society at large.

A large majority of White people believed that African-Americans were second-class citizens and treated them that way. The racial tensions leading to those events are reflected in the plot and themes of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Chapter Three

Gothic Traits

Gothicism, also known as horror romanticism, creates an air of suspense and terror. This atmosphere is a pronounced feeling of dread, which can be physical fear of the body or a spiritual fear of the mind and soul. Gothic traits are meant to provide the non unpleasurable thrills of mystery and dread. Harper Lee uses Gothicism in *To Kill a Mockingbird* effectively. She uses seven gothic traits: a castle, crime, religion, a ghostly or demonic figure, magic, the phenomena of nature, and a gothic villain. These traits work together to create the gothic element in the novel. The setting is the key to

gothicism, which provides the proper air of mystery and it is the backdrop for other scenes of innumerable horrors. The main setting is the haunted castle. The haunted castle does not need to be a castle. An old run-down or ruined house can serve equally well. The actual building is unimportant as long as it provides the proper gothic atmosphere. Such an old house is the setting of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The house of Seven Gables*. Similarly in Edgar Allan Poe's short story *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the ancestral Usher home takes the place of the medieval castle.

The Radley house is the haunted castle of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Located three lots down from the Finch home, the Radley house stirs the darker emotions in Scout and Jem Finch. Scout describes the Radley Place as it looks from the street.

The house was low, once white with a deep front porch and green shutters, but had a long ago darkened to the color of the slate gray around it. Rain rotten shingles drooped over the eaves of the veranda; oak trees kept the sun away. (9)

The house is always tightly locked. The windows remain shuttered constantly, and the blinds drawn. The screenless doors are closed throughout the week as well as on Sundays. The rear of the Radley house enhances its haunted quality. One night, Scout, Jem, and their new friend Dill Harris creep through the backyard, hoping they can peek inside the house. Scout becomes timorous as they approach the house and she gets her first good look. The back of the Radley house was less inviting than the front: a ramshackle porch ran the width of the house; there were two doors and between the two dark windows an old Franklin stove sat in a corner of the porch above it a hat-rack mirror caught the moon and shone eerily. Scout and Jem never see the house interior. Anything connected to Radley place is considered evil and malignant. The backyard fence separates the Radley's property from the school's playground. Pecan

trees in the Radley yard drop nuts on the other side of fence. Few people knowingly eat the pecans because they fear the nuts are deadly poison. One child claims he nearly died from eating the pizened nuts.

Living inside the Radley house is someone who frightens Jem and Scout more than the house. According to Scout, the mere description of whom was enough to make us behave for days. The person is Arthur Radley. Boo is the ghostly or demonic figure prevalent in gothicism. An aura of mystery and fear surrounds his very name, no one ever sees him. Many people of Maycomb, adults as well as children, think of him as the town's madman, ghost, or ghoul. Scout describes the local attitudes about Boo:

Inside the house lived a malevolent phantom... People said he went out at night when the moon was down, and peeped in windows. When people's azaleas froze... it was because he breathed on them. Any stealthy crimes committed in Maycomb were his work. Once... people's chickens and household pets were found mutilated; although the culprit was Crazie Addie ... [people were] unwillingly to discard their suspicions. (9)

Few people have seen Boo for over fifteen years, but a popular ghoulish conception of him is passed by word of mouth. Jem relates this to Dill that Boo was six-and-a-half feet tall, judging from his tracks; he dined on raw, you could never wash the blood off. There was a long jagged scar that ran across his face; what teeth he had were yellow and rotten; his eyes popped, and he drooled most of the time. Boo mysteriously comes and goes in the night and Jem and Scout never see him. But he knows them. He leaves them small gifts in a hole of an oak tree that sits in the Radley front yard. The items leaves are such things as a spelling medal, a broken watch, two soap dolls made to resemble Scout and Jem, and a case knife. One cold winter's night

he gives Scout a blanket. Maudie Atkinson's house burns down, and they are forced from their house in case the fire spreads. As the night wears on Scout dozes and Boo covers her sleepy and cold body with a blanket.

The Finch children have a strong desire to see Boo. They concoct the schemes to make him come out, but they fail. Scout finally gets her wish at the end of the novel. His true looks, while not like the gory image the town envisions, does enhance his ghostly visage. Scout describes him as he stands in Jem's room. He pressed the palms of his hands against the wall. They were white hands, sickly white hands that had never seen the sun, so white they stood out. His face was as white as his hands, but for a shadow on his jutting chin. His cheeks were thin to hollowness; his mouth was wide, there were shallow, almost delicate indentations at his temples and his gray eyes were so colorless, that made Scout to think Boo was blind. His hair was dead and thin, almost feathery on top of his head.

Dill and I followed on his heels. Safely on our porch, panting and out of breath, we looked back. The old house was the same, droopy and stick but we saw an inside shutter move. Flick. A tiny, almost invisible movement and the house was still. (16)

Like a ghost, Boo cannot stand exposure to bright lights. He gets Scout to lead him to the dimly lit porch rather than the livingroom with its bright lights. He needs the darkness. Boo is the ghostly figure in the gothic tradition. A mysterious crime or a guilty sense of wrong doing is another trait for gothicism. Boo is tormented creature who is anguished by an indefinable guilt for some crime it cannot remember having committed. The crime may be spiritual, like the sin of adultery committed by Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne. It may be criminal like the murder of old Pyncheon in *The House of the Seven Gables*.

The only crime Boo commits is a one-night drinking spree during which he and a few teenage friends harass Maycomb's old town marshal. For punishment, Boo's father locks the boy inside the Radley house. A year or two later his mother accuses him of stabbing his father with scissors. Nobody but Mr. Radley knows what has actually happened, but the sheriff incarcerates Boo in the courthouse basement, which serves as the Gothic device of a dungeon. He nearly dies from the damp. Boo is soon entrusted to his father's custody and returned to the house. No one ever sees him again in the day time. The townspeople do wonder what has become of him. At one point Jem speculates that he has died and his body stuffed up the chimney. Scout disbelieves Jem and wonders how he is forced to remain inside the house.

The unknown nature of Boo's crime, the severe and bizarre punishment, and the pervading silence that overhangs the entire situation heightens the novel's air of mystery and feelings of dread. Abbeys, cloistered monks, and strange religious practices are standard gothic fare. Two characters, who prominently typify the gothic traits are Ann Radcliff's Schedoni of *The Italian* and Matthew Lewis's Ambrosia of *The Monk*. In this tradition of Schedoni and Ambrosia are Mr. Radley and his oldest son, Nathan. Father and son resemble each other physically and temperamentally. They share physical characteristics with Radcliff's Schedoni. Schedoni is extremely thin in figure. His countenance is serious; his skin is pale and bleached. Mr. Radley's eyes are so colorless they did not reflect light. His demeanor is grave and unsmiling, and his posture is ramrod straight. He, too, is thin.

Lewis's monk, Amrosio, is an amorous, licentious man whose lustful dealings with women are cruel and merciless. Unlike Ambrosio the Radley's passion is religion, not sexual lust but they are as ruthless as Ambrosia in satisfying their desires. The use of gothic trait of religion thickens the aura of mystery and horror surrounding the

Radleys and increases the suspense and feelings of dread by adding a satanic feeling to the gothic atmosphere.

The Radleys belong to a Protestant sect that is fundamentalist to an extreme degree. They cloister themselves away from all who are not of their faith. They have a little contact with the rest of Maycomb's community. Maudie Atkinson, a friendly neighbor of the Finches, explains to Scout that the Radleys are foot-washing Baptists who are more hard-shell than she herself is. The foot-washers believe anything pleasurable is a deadly sin. For example, they loudly condemn Maudie because she spends more time growing pretty flowers than reading her Bible. The Bible is taken so literally that, according to Maudie, foot-washers think women are sin by definition. Their devotion is as hypocritical as the piety of the young Ambrosia whose religious zeal is, in reality, spiritual conceit and pride. Schedoni and Ambrosio commit murders. The Radleys do not actually kill anyone, but they nearly destroy Boo's soul. For his crime Boo must be punished, and Mr. Radley followed by Nathan after the old man's death strives to insure that Boo's punishment is eternal. They go about the task with the religious fervor of fanatics. When Nathan discovers that Boo has been leaving gifts for Scout and Jem in the oak tree, he seals up the tree hole, depriving Boo of even the simple human pleasure of sharing. Spells, supernatural events, enchanted objects, magic amulets and potions are fairly common in gothicism

Many adults and children in *To Kill a Mockingbird* believe in supernatural phenomena. Spells and incantations provide protection from the evil spirits, or haints, which stalk Maycomb. To protect themselves as they walk past the Radley Place, the Negroes whistle to frighten away the malignant evil of the house. The blacks also believe in the phenomena known as hot steams. Jem gives instructions on the nature of the hot steam:

Haven't you ever walked along a lonesome road at night and passed by a hot place?" Jem asked Dill." A hot steam's somebody who can't get to heaven, just wallows around on lonesome roads an' if you walk through him you'll be one, too, and you'll go around at night suckin' people's breath". How can you keep from passing through?" "You can't," said Jem. "Sometimes they stretch all the way across the road, but if you hafta go through one say, 'Angel-bright, life-in-death, get off the road, don't suck my breath.' That keeps 'em from wrapping around you. (41)

Scout and Jem laugh at their idea that hot steams might be real, but they accept as reality other forms of magic. When Jem returns to fetch his trousers which he lost the nights they sneaked into the Radley's backyard, he finds the pants neatly folded over the fence and repaired. He tells Scout that he feels the pants were left there, as if someone knew he would return for them. Jem said that he felt like somebody was reading his mind. For a long time afterwards, Jem fears his every thought is known. They eventually discover that Boo has been watching them from his window for years, and he simply knows them very well.

One element of magic foreshadows Boo's rescue of Scout and Jem. One of Boo's gifts is a pair of Indian-head pennies. Jem gravely considers the pennies as magic amulets. He tells Scout and Indian-heads are powerful magic:

Well, India-heads-well, they come from the Indians. They're real strong magic; they make you have good luck. Not like fried chicken you're looking for it, but things like long life 'n' good health... these are real valuable to somebody. (39)

The pennies are indeed good fortune for Scout and Jem. Boo saves them from death, allowing them to escape from early deaths. Moonlight, blowing wind, lightning, and other such natural phenomena effectively lend themselves to the development of the gothic atmosphere, particularly deep darkness which often attends the crucial events. In two of the novel's crucial scenes, Lee envelopes the settings in darkness. The first critical event marks Jem's first step into manhood. The second incident is the climax when Bob Ewell attacks Jem and Scout. The first happens on a moon-drenched night. Scout, Jem, and Dill creep under the Radley's back fence in an attempt to peek through the shutters at Boo. The moon disappears, and the dark swallows the world. Barely able to see, they bump into objects and each other.

A shotgun blast cuts through the silence and darkness. As they flee, Jem entangles his trousers in the fence, abandons them, and runs off in his undershorts. Later, he decides he must retrieve them, even though he believes he risks his life. Scout and Jem approach the climactic scene: the huge oak tree near the corner of the schoolyard and the Radley Place. Jem thinks he hears a strange sound. Scout hears nothing but becomes uneasy.

The night was still. Occasionally there was a sudden breeze that hit my bare legs, but it was all that remains of a promised windy night. This was the stillness before the storm. They move on in the night. As they approach the oak tree, she hears the noise.

Bob Ewell charges out of the darkness to kill them. He breaks Jem's arm, knocking the boy unconscious. Attacking Scout, he tries to knife her, but he is thwarted by her costume. He is attempting to crush her when he suddenly releases her. He gothic villain is never a sympathetic character, for he and his crimes are made to appear even more monstrous by the addition of gratuitous acts of cruelty of sadism. Another reason

he is despicable is that he acknowledges the moral codes of society and his own wickedness by violating these codes. The gothic villain pursues his evil to his certain death. Bob Ewell fits the description of the gothic villain. Ewell, a minor character, he is typical gothic villain. He takes sinister pride in his cruelty and never feels remorse or pity. The one trait that seems to intensify Ewell's repugnance is his cowardice. Ewell savagely beats his oldest daughter because, isolated from human contact and affection by her father, she tries to seduce a Negro man. Ewell brings a false charge of rape against the man, Tom Robinson, to cover his brutal attack upon his own daughter, and he lies on the witness stand to secure a conviction. He hypocritically proclaims he seeks justice and the protection of Southern womanhood. After Robinson's death, he torments Robinson's widow with implied threats of either assault or rape. He stops only when her employer confronts him man-to-man with a promise of legal action. Ewell is too cowardly to perform his cruel deeds openly. He harasses Helen Robinson only when she is alone, just as he beats his children when no one is near. When Atticus, who is Robinson's lawyer, and Judge Taylor reveal him to be a liar and hypocrite he is, he seeks revenge.

Afraid to deal with them personally, he employs underhanded methods: he tries to burgle Judge Taylor's house and, as I have noted, he tries to kill Scout and Jem. Ewell flouts many codes and customs of his society. He gets drunk in public rather than in private which is tolerated. His drinking causes hardships for his children. He is violent when drunk and he spends his welfare money on green bootleg whiskey. The innocent suffer of his conduct. Refusing Work progress administration job, he is the first in line to get his relief check, and he lets everyone know he buys liquor with the money. He enjoys outraging the townspeople. He goes to great lengths to violate even small customs and codes. He curses violently in front of women and children, conduct not

condoned in Maycomb, and laughs at the discomfort he causes. Ignoring the Wesleyan principle of personal cleanliness and hygiene, he houses his family next to the town dump and keeps his body filthy. Scout notices at Tom Robinson's trial that for the very first time she is seeing Ewell clean. Ewell takes pride in his cruelty and violations of social mores. In the manner of the gothic villain, he pursues without remorse his evil course of action until he dies a deserved and violent death. The use of gothic villain and traits of gothicism do not make *To Kill a Mockingbird* a simple roman noir, a novel of terror and wonder. The novel contains other elements of Romanticism. But the gothic traits play a significant role in the overall Romanticism of the novel. The next chapter deals with the vision of children. The children's vision, perspective and innocence reflected throughout the novel are dealt in the upcoming chapter. It also explores on the romantic vision of the children.

Chapter Four

Vision of Children

The Romantic vision of a child is expressed, according to Charles Babentroth, by beliefs in the innocence of the child and in the perspicacious observation of reality and truth by the child. The three children in *To Kill a Mockingbird* Jem, Dill and Scout take on the romantic qualities of the child, innocence and his clear perception of reality.

South lacks any sense of original sin or evil existing within herself. She lives in harmony with nature's way and sees most occurrences as being simple and natural. Right and wrong are decided by feeling; religious dogmas and concepts confuse her. Maudie Atkinson tries to explain to Scout some religious differences between Baptist

and foot-washing Baptist. When informed that the foot-washing Baptist believe Maudie to be eternally condemned because she loves to raise flowers, Scout grows incredulous saying that his confidence in pupil Gospel lessened at the vision of Miss Maudie stewing forever in various Protestant hells. She thinks a creature living in peril of everlasting torment was incomprehensible. Scout simply judges: “that ain’t right” (234). After Maudie’s attempts to explain divergent biblical interpretations, Scout comes to this conclusion about institutional religion.

Scout is free from many conventional ideas about what actions are sinful or dirty. In chapter six Scout, with Jem and Dill, watches late one night their neighbours, Mr. Avery, urinate under streetlight. Scout does not feel a hint of guilt or a sense of wrongdoing on Mr. Avery’s part or observation. In fact she rather admires his ability with a glint of jealousy. She finds nothing evil or dirty in a normal, natural bodily process.

If this is the reward, there is something to say for sin. As can be seen, Scout’s concept of sin is not tied to religion or social conventions. A sin, to Scout, a child of nature, is a violation of nature’s ways by harming something or someone needlessly. For example, Scout understands the idea that it is a sin to kill a mockingbird, because mockingbirds do not harm and their singing brings people pleasure. To harm such a creature is a sin against nature. At the end of the novel, Scout readily understands Sheriff Tate’s reason for not disclosing that Boo Radley saved her life Jem’s, Boo’s shy sensitive nature could not withstand the popularity of his being a hero. She tells her father: “Well it’d be sort of like shootin’ a mocking bird, wouldn’t it? (304).

Scout’s innocence is also reflected by her open, honest heart. Rarely does she chooses her words or conduct herself in order to please people. She usually reacts to situations with instinctive honesty. For example, in chapter three, she beats up Walter

Cunningham, Jr. because he is an indirect cause of her being disciplined by their teacher. She punches her cousin Francis in the mouth, in chapter nine, for calling Atticus a foul name. Cecil Jacobs, a schoolmate, commits the same mistake and feels her wrath.

Scout's innocence allows her to understand and respect Jem's occasional desire to be alone. She states sometimes in the middle of a game he would go off and play himself behind the car house. When Jem becomes moody after the abortive attempt to get a peek at Boo in chapter eight, Scout feels she must not ask him any questions so she left Jem alone and tried not to bother him. She feels that he will talk to her when he wants. Scout respects Jem's desire for privacy as he reaches early adolescence. She does not understand the changes through which he is going, but she defers to her intuition and gives him his solitude.

Her instinctive behaviour is also honest, and her honesty occasionally gets her into trouble with adults. On her first day at school, Scout tries to explain to her teacher that the poor but proud Walter Cunningham will not accept lunch money: You are shamin' him, Miss Caroline. Walter hasn't got a quarter to bring you, and you can't use any stove wood. (24)

Early in chapter three, Scout's instinctive honesty gets into her conflicts with adults once more. Watching Walter pour syrup over all his food, she comments

“He would probably have poured it into his milk glass had

I not asked what the Sam hill he was doing”. (27)

Scout does not understand that she has broken a custom that states one does not embarrass a house guest. She only knows she asked Walter a simple question.

Scout's frank questions and statements do not always anger adults. Calpurnia, who knows Scout is devoid of malice, usually understands Scout's innocence. After

attending Sunday service with Calpurnia at the Negro church, Scout notices that Calpurnia speaks differently to blacks as she does to whites. Scout means no offense; all she wants is information.

When Scout discovers that Dolphus Raymond, a white man prefers to live with blacks rather than whites, drinks only Coca Cola and not whiskey, she blurts out that he just pretends that he is half. She cuts off her statement because he laughs. Raymond appreciates her frankness. Encouraged,

Scout points out that ain't honest, Mr. Raymond, making yourself out badder'n you are already.(221). Scout's statements and questions seem blunt and rude, but her words normally lack a vicious bite. Because Scout is innocent, her words lack the power of insult.

Scout's honesty does not always gratify or anger adults; she sometimes shames them. She disperses the lynch mob by attempting to chat with Walter Cunningham, Sr., about his son and legal entailment. Cunningham is shocked into leaving her innocence. Atticus observes that it took an eight year old child to bring them to their senses your children made Walter Cunningham stand in my shoes for a minute. As Fred Erisman suggests, the truly good people admire and wish to imitate Scout's innocence and innate honesty.

Like all children, Scout cries. But Scout, as the child of nature, cries only when nature's ways are violated. She barely stifles her tears in chapter seven when Nathan Radley cements in the knot-hole, because she intuitively feels that Nathan Radley's purpose, as mentioned previously, is too hurt Boo.

Jem cries when confronted by injustice and unnatural hatred. After Robinson is convicted, Scout relates that it was Jem's turn to cry. His face was streaked with angry

tears as we made our way through the cheerful crowd. Jem, Dill, and Scout reflect their innocence by their reactions to the things that they regard as violations of nature's ways.

Scout is vexed as Atticus, in a strange fit of weakness, gives in to Alexandra and tries to convince Jem and Scout to live up to their Finch family name. Scout relates her reaction that for no reason she began to cry, but she could not stop. She is saddened by the realization that her father is going against his beliefs and is violating his own nature.

That the child weeps when nature's ways are broken is reinforced by actions of Dill and Jem. During the trial Dill becomes nauseated by the prosecutor's use of racial slurs. Dill explains himself to Scout:

It ain't right, somehow it ain't right to do 'em that way. Hasn't anybody got any business talkin' like that it just makes me sick. Dolphus Raymond elaborates on Dill's instinctive reaction to bigotry: Things haven't caught with that one's instinct yet. (220)

Raymond further explains the things about which to cry about the simple hell people give other people without even thinking. Cry about the hell white people give colored folks, without even stopping to think that they're people, too.

Scout's innocence is also demonstrated by her lack of a sense of time. The ability to feel time's passage is missing. She thinks that preoccupation with time is one of those complications of life that Rousseau feels, according to Jacques Barzun, is a result of civilization's corrupting force. Scout is free of this tainting influence. Much to Alexandra's dismay, Scout has not the slightest interest in family or the history of the South. Scout is concerned only with the present. When she displays no concern about future Jem tells Scout in frustration that's because you can't hold something in your

mind but a little while. Jem's statement is meant to be insulting, but it is actually accurate.

One evening after Tom Robinson's death, Scout thinks back over the events of the last two years and remembers the raid in the Radley's backyard. But she cannot place it in time. And it had happened years ago. No, only last summer, summer before last, when time was playing tricks on me. Unable to resolve the problem, she merely decides that she must remember to ask Jem. Then, she drops the matter completely, for time holds no real interest for her.

Scout innocently accepts magic and other supernatural phenomena as a normal part of everyday reality. She believes without question, for a long time, that Boo Radley is a malevolent phantom, and she finds Jem's description of Boo, quoted earlier, to be reasonable. While she publicly scoffs at the existence of hot steams, she takes Jem's word that the Indian- head pennies are valuable good luck charms. Her intuitive acceptance of the supernatural marks that Scout is the innocent child of nature who knows the reality, according to C.M. Bowra, exists spiritually and mystically as well as physically. Scout's belief in the supernatural also demonstrates that she is the Romantic child of innocence.

Alexandra forbids Scout to visit Calpurnia's home for the same reason that she refuses Scout and Jem permission to invite Walter Cunningham, Jr. over for supper. Alexandra tells Scout her reason you can scrub Walter Cunningham till he shines, you can put him in shoes and a new suit, but he'll never be like Jem. Because he is trash, that's why you can't play with him. According to Alexandra, the Cunningham family and Calpurnia, by implication, are not our kind of folks.

Scout observes the fact that there was indeed a caste system in Maycomb. According to Alexandra, background is a deciding force in determining a person's

worth. Scout and Jem ponder the meaning of background, but they never arrive at a suitable definition. She punches holes in every one of Jem's attempts to explain. For example trying to demonstrate that the Finches are in some fashion different from the Cunningham, Jem states that their family has been reading and writing longer. Scout's vision shows her that he helps his father farm and misses school.

Scout's innate vision permits her to penetrate the hypocrisy and unreasoning prejudices of Maycomb's people. In chapter twenty-six, her class at school discusses Nazi Germany's persecution of Jews. Her teacher Miss Gates becomes red-faced as she preaches against the Nazi programs against Jews. But Scout grows angrily confused at Miss Gates hypocrisy.

Scout's vision causes her to be repelled by the adult's civilized world. Scout prefers the honest, simple world of nature as do, according to Babentroth, Wordsworth's children in *The Prelude*, or of other children. The evening Dill returns to Maycomb as a runaway, Scout sadly perceives that Jem has entered the world of adults. She and Dill, as Edwin Bruell states, are oppressed by grown-up injustice which they find all about them and seek each other for comfort. They sleep in the same bed in pristine innocence, and Dill says with simple purity let's get a baby. The two children cling to each other, knowing they share a common understanding of the world.

Scout rejects school because she sees it is a threat to her vision. Maycomb's school system operates on a procedure designed to force children to learn to see life as the state wants. Scout notices her father and uncle have done well despite the fact they have no formal schooling expect college. She feels that school is not serving her interests it could not help receiving the impression that she was being cheated out of something.

Out of what she knew, she did not believe that twelve years of unrelieved boredom was exactly the state had mind for me. She intuitively feels the suppression of her individuality, and tires a variety of scheme to convince Atticus to keep her at home. She uses cuss-words she learns at school, attempts to catch ringworm and threatens to run away.

Scout also distrusts the world of science in the manner, as Babentroth points out, of Wordsworth's child subjects. Scout's vision can be observed by her attitudes towards her uncle, a physician. He was one of the few men of science who never terrified me, probably because he never behaved like a doctor. Scout likes her uncle because he is truthful about medical details such as how much removing a splinter will hurt. He does not lie. He also retains his humanity with, as Scout notes in chapter nine, a rather broad sense of humour. According to Scout's vision these characteristics seem to be lacking in other men of science, and for this reason she fears them.

Scout is also repelled by people who work in government. She describes the offices of county officials as dark, dusty hutches that smell of decaying paper and damp urine-stained concrete. She pictures the officials as follows the inhabitants of these offices were creatures of their environments little gray-faced men, they seemed untouched by wind or sun. The comparison implies that Scout believes them weak and cowardly. Scout, the child of nature, feels a repugnance for the image of people who shut sunlight out of their lives.

As Bob Ewell testifies against Tom Robinson, Scout is reminded of the town dump and the varmints that feasted on Maycomb's refuse. His receding forehead and seemingly nonexistent chin are connected by the base of a long, thin pointed nose, which gives him the mean appearance of a rat.

Scout receives a different image from Ewell's daughter Mayella as she testifies. Scout sees Mayella as a steady-eyed cat with a twitchy tail. This simile indicates that Scout's first impression is that Mayella is a liar.

A mental picture recurs to Scout by which she explains her understanding of evil and injustice. This image of Atticus stepping out into an empty street on a cold winter's day, pushing back his glasses, and shooting the rabid dog. It is through the recollection of this event that she interprets two affairs.

Scout as the innocent child of nature, does not comprehend the prejudice, evil, injustice, and hypocrisy in verbal terms. She is incapable of expressing herself in that manner. Instead, she instinctively equates the evil that she is witnessing to a mad dog, a diseased creature that is out of balance with nature's ways. She metaphorically sees that her father is attempting to fight the evil by shooting the mad dog.

Scout is able to feel truth if not actually able to see it; her childhood vision extends to the heart. Dolphus Raymond is aware of Scout's ability. When she asks him why he is willing to entrust his secret to Dill and herself that he is not a drunk, he replies because you're children and you can understand it. Scout comprehends that Raymond simply wants to give Maycomb a reason it can understand for his living with Negroes. She appreciates his courtesy.

Possessing natural innocence and a clear vision of reality, Scout assumes that her father is the norm for most adults. This misconception causes her some confusion and discomforts as she discovers that most adults are not at all like Atticus. Scout does not recognize that her father is not ordinary. Scout does not realize that Atticus is of a heroic mold and lives in harmony in nature. Her intuitive vision of her innocence informs her that he is the type of a person that everyone ought to be.

Scout, along with Jem and Dill, possesses innocence and a perspicacity of vision. These Romantic traits clarify Scout's role in the overall romanticism of *To Kill a Mockingbird* by explaining her precocious behaviour and her judgments on the novel's events. The last chapter analyse with thematic study of analysis.

Chapter Five

Summation

After reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, one discovers that Harper Lee, through a use of history, moral instruction, and character development, has presented a strong moral message to her audience. Her title suggest that a sin occurs when one kills a mockingbird, and Scout Finch's recounting the central summer of her life reflects the integrity of her moral development. With historical context and character representation, Lee's moral message finds weight. She begins by setting her story in the final years of the Great Depression exploiting her audience's familiarity with the financial position of most Southerners, especially the poor white farmer. She then establishes the mindset and attitude of most Southern white toward other races and cultures, which may well represent the sentiments of many Americans. Furthermore, a look at the Finch children, their father, and their community reveals a deep moral

message. Depicting fatherly instruction and neighborly advice, Lee educates her reader on the moral responsibility of how to treat others. As the children search of clues to their mysterious neighbor's existence and face the consequences of racism in their small Southern town, they receive lessons in how to treat others with respect and kindness regardless of who they are or from where they come. Finally, Lee's characters demonstrates how often people suffer misjudgment and mistreatment because of fear and prejudice; Lee asserts that one can live among all cultures and races without fear and prejudice. Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* encourages its readers to consider their moral judgment and subsequent treatment of others.

Setting her novel in motion, Lee describes the difficulties of the Southern whites and particularly the rural farmer who was hit especially hard during the Great Depression. Looking at the 1930s remain readers of both the financial hardships and relational issues faced; during this difficult time the farm barely sustained life for many farmers, yet they used what they grew to pay for outside services. This hardship forced the poor to rely on themselves and be defensive when threatened; in the aftermath of Southern Reconstruction, the rural farmers often banded together to keep their social status higher than that of southern blacks. Setting up the Old Sarum community, Lee pulls in this high emotion when Bob Ewell makes accusations against Tom Robinson.

Because *To Kill a Mockingbird* is narrated through the child focalizer's perspective, society is perceived with curiosity. Scout has an important voice, especially when it comes to how race is perceived. Because Scout has such a close relationship with other social groups in Maycomb, she learns to respect others. She is not the perfect child, on the contrary, she is violent, strong and crafty with her words when we first met her. The reader follows her on the journey of moral development and partakes in her process of confronting into a more reflected and nuanced human being.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the limitation in knowledge of social code and how it contributes to the prejudice manifested in Scout invites the reader to an empathetic reflection. Furthermore, internalization of the society's code of language contributes to understand how child's focalization is corrupted by external factors. Scout's process of developing an independent thinker brings the reader on an emphatical journey. Because childhood is a time of exploration, failing and learning for Scout, narrative empathy is portrayed in relation to how she experiences and understands topics such as race and class differences.

The gothic traits in the novel provide the proper setting for an air of terror and suspense. The seven gothic traits a castle, a crime, a religion, a ghostly or demonic figure, a magic, the phenomena of nature, and the gothic villain work together to create gothicism in the novel..

The romantic element of the vision of the child expresses the beliefs, according to Charles Babentroth, in the innocence of the child and in the perspicacity of the childhood vision. The three children in the novel Dill, Jem and especially Scout, the narrator and the persona are presented in the light of these Romantic views of childhood.

The third and the most important element in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the romantic hero. Atticus fits Peter Thorslev's definition of the Romantic hero as one who epitomizes many of the important aspects of Romanticism. Atticus represents or incorporates the following Romantic elements recognition of the innocence and the perspicacious vision of childhood, sensitivity, a belief in the basic goodness of mankind, a zeal for freedom and rights of the individual, obedience of conscience, a regard for nature, and a faith in a moral universe. Atticus also shares the following traits with romantic heroes a noble background, courtesy, isolation, and involvement in a

quest. Atticus embodies some of these Romantic elements, as Fred Erisman demonstrates, as they are expounded in Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Nature and Self-Reliance* and in it has shown Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* and *Civil Disobedience*.

These three Romantic elements express the majority of the Romantic traits noted in Chapter One, and they are the foundation upon which the Romanticism of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is built and made clear.

The racist action of white people to black people made most of them blind because of prejudice. White people in that area had made their own assumption if black people were poor, uneducated and the source of the criminal. Unfortunately, the racist action is not only for black people who had defended the black people and this novel Atticus was a person in this condition. He defended Tom Robinson and he got resistance from people and people judge if he is not even better than the black people that he defends about. The influence about defended black people was not only have consequences to Atticus as adults but also to Scout and Jem. Both of the child got bad treatment not only from adult from kids also. Kids had bad influence to hate black people from the adult. Racial prejudice to black people had influenced the mind side of Maycomb people and influenced each other from the social history that grown up with social communication if something that has any relation with black people deem it wrong or negative.

The writer assumes that in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the racial prejudice of people in Maycomb county was very strong and the social culture influenced by social condition which was black people always wrong even they cannot prove it yet.

Amir appear immediately different from Scout because of their cultural differences, but they are set within a similar social framework. The main difference is their paternal influence, and while both children learn much from their fathers, Amir

does not get the same paternal affection as Scout. Because the fathers are the most important influence in the children's life, they affect how the children perceive the world around them. In *The Kite Runner*, characterization through recognizable emotions is an important influencer of narrative empathy as the Western reader might not immediately recognize Amir's situation. Empathetic features such as universal emotions connect the reader with Amir despite cultural differences. Additionally, the limitation in knowledge of social code renders Amir vulnerable. The cruelty inflicted upon Amir and the manifestation of social code in him are factors that might affect the reader's empathy.

Vulnerability is established as a common feature for both novels. The ways in which this vulnerability is created diverges. It is when the narrative provides techniques that highlight this vulnerability that the reader might be more likely to empathize with the characters situation and emotion. Limitation is the children's perspective is the most evident contributor to their vulnerability. Because they do not completely understand the social code and the way adults communicate, they are left out of the social sphere, and become vulnerable because of their inability to shape the society and culture they are born into. The narration is important because it expresses how Scout and Amir experience this vulnerability. Both children have internalized social codes when we first meet them, but Amir and Scout exceed the values and norms of their societies and learn to become independent thinkers.

The embodiment of social codes in the beginning of the novels is evident in the language, thoughts and behaviour of the child focalizers. Scout and Amir embody social structures similarly, which in turn affect them in terms of how they view others. Both Scout and Amir show how despite they are thought to be respectful and accepting, they indeed show discriminating attitudes. They are humanized because of their abilities to

make mistakes. Scout and Amir's perspective is enriching because it reveals how the children think and experience their surroundings. Through these novels the reader is allowed into the mind of the child. The discourse is rich in childish and child-like reflections of society and other groups of people. These nuanced reflection lets the reader experience how humans are very similar despite any social group or category one belongs to. Consequently, this might invite the reader to reflect empathetically on how the children perceives others, and also how the reader perceives others, and also how the reader perceives others in real life.

The dissonant narrator's perspectives also influence the novels similarity. Both Scout and Amir looks back at their childhood through more omniscient and experienced eyes and reflect critically on their past actions, the narrating selves contribute to promote empathy for their past selves through emphasizing the childishness and the child-likeness that characterizes their childhood selves. By acknowledging their mistakes and showing how they have learned to be more respectful and accepting, empathy is promoted for both the children they used to be adults they have become.

One of the important aspects in the novel is how both Amir and Scout act immorally and are cruel to others. However, this behaviour and these actions are legitimated because they are excused by the fact that Scout and Amir are children, and the reader might empathize with their childishness through understanding their developmental level and how childishness is a natural part of their behaviour.

Looking at these two novels together supports the notion of how the perspective of the child possesses traits and techniques that promote empathy. These novels are different because they represent different cultures, different social conflicts and different times, yet they are connected by the child focalizer and the dissonant narrator.

Because the aspect of children telling stories in adult fiction has been paid little attention by literary critics, it is necessary to look at the narrative techniques behind it in order to understand how such a perspective can create a closer and more empathetic relationship with the reader. *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Kite Runner* are greatly explored in terms of the themes within them, but many critics fail to acknowledge how the narrative portray these themes. It is important to consider the child's perspective in how the themes are portrayed, as it contributes to create a more empathetic portrayal of them.

Literary empathy in adult fiction also lacks the same focus as literary empathy in children's books. It is important to acknowledge how adult fiction also can promote a greater understanding of others and influence the reader to an empathetical reflection of fictional characters. By promoting the empathetical value adult fiction can have, it might make it easier for people to understand how they can benefit and learn to be more empathetic through reading.

Both *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Kite Runner* possess many literary techniques that promotes empathy. Keen's exploration of these techniques seems to correspond well with how they are represented in the novels. Even though Keen notes how it is challenging to categorize narrative techniques as empathy-promoting, it is possible to assume that tendencies can be found through further exploration of these techniques.

Racial prejudice can emerge in Maycomb County, because Radley family has uncommon habit for Maycomb society. They do not do what always done by Maycomb society. They do not do what always done by Maycomb people. Most of them also prejudge the descendant of family with bad habit from their perspective. Most of white people in Maycomb County extremely racial prejudice against black people. They think

that black people. They think that black people are lower than them in social status. Furthermore, feeling different among people in Maycomb society will exist for long time, because there are certain people who always suppose it to be problem in society. They keep it and spread it as long as they can. Therefore, the researcher can take the root of racial prejudice in Maycomb County is difference among people in society. In the other places, difference might not be a big problem that can cause social problem in society. But in Maycomb County, it is the root of racial prejudice in the society that can cause some new problems. Difference among people in Maycomb County grow up well, because it is inherited by the past generation. Therefore, *To Kill a Mockingbird* wants to show that feeling different from other inheritance from generation to generation. The gulf of difference will be opened as long as some certain people try to make it opened wider.

The impacts of racial prejudice are can disturb the harmony of social life. Racial prejudice can cause segregation in society that separates certain group with the others especially between minority and majority. Majority often segregates minority in society. Segregation means that certain people cannot access towards public facilities as their right of citizenship. Black people cannot use what white people use. Segregation hides equality of human being for accepting the same right. In addition racial prejudice also can emerge discrimination in society. Prejudiced people can do discriminations toward another people because their haphazard reasons. Thus, different people in society cannot get similar treatments as the others. Racial prejudice can cause someone oppresses the other people. It can support people to do intimidation toward another people. Therefore, there will be violence, terrorism, and making fun against the others.

Literary empathy is important in understanding how a novel or a text might affect readers. It would be interesting to understand how literary empathy influence the

reader in the real world. By examining literary techniques, it is possible to understand what aspects of a narrative the reader connects empathetically. It could be useful to conduct research on how these literary techniques have a transferable value to the reader's life. Keen emphasizes many techniques that make readers view fictional characters more empathetically and notes how empathy for fictional characters might be transferable and make the reader more empathetic in the real world. Despite Keen and others research on literary empathy, one cannot assume that literary empathy is always transferable to the readers and how they experience empathy by reading fiction, and if certain narrative techniques are more empathy-promoting than others. Such research would establish techniques as empathy promoting, which could be influenced in how novels can be used in education to promote understanding and acceptance in an increasingly globalized world.

To Kill a Mockingbird becomes a mirror of racial prejudice condition in Alabama. There are many real events happen in Alabama that become the inspiration of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. There were unfair treatment which was gotten by nine black boy's in 1931 because they were accused for raping two white women, although no evidence that prove them as the defendant. This case is similar to Tom Robinson's case of Rosa Park in 1951. They experienced the same case. They were separated from white people's place and facilities. In addition, racial prejudice can happen to anybody everywhere and every time. It can happen in society, because the major of people in society cannot accept different things from the others. Yet, there is one common thing that difference will always be in human's life, because nobody is created similar. Actually, difference does not make any trouble in society as long as no one makes a problem out of it. People just need to be relived toward difference in society, and need to tolerate each other.

To Kill a Mockingbird depicts life through the honest, easy and remarkable eyes of the child. Throughout the novel empathy is invited through the narrator's experience through the narrative technique. This novel is a perfect example for adult fiction where the reader can learn from the children's reflection. Through the eyes of children the adults learn to empathize with the unknown and other. One of the important aspects in the novel is how Scout act immorally and are cruel to others. However, this behaviour and these actions are legitimized because they are excused by the fact that Scout and Amir are children, and the reader might empathise with their childishness through understanding their developmental level and how childishness is a natural part of their behaviour. A child is known for its innocence. In this novel the children reflects the innocence to the adults. The character Boo Radley is mentally challenged and seemed childlike and arrogant at the beginning of the novel. By the end of the novel he saves the children from Bob Ewell. Boo Radley's innocence reflected at the course of final scene. This also shows he like the children has the quality of empathy within them.

After analyzing this novel which is using sociological approach, the writer concludes that *To Kill a Mockingbird* also analysis the other theoretical approach such as physiological and structural approach.

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